The Social Construction of Aboriginal Peoples in the Saskatchewan Print Media

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples in two Saskatchewan daily newspapers. This research is based on the question: "How is the notion of Aboriginal Peoples socially constructed in the print media?" Previous research indicates that media portrayals of minority groups are often partial and stereotypical. Such portrayals are partly responsible for linking the unacceptable behavior of minority groups to phenotypic traits, and thereby contributing to the social significance of "race." Discourse analysis is used to analyze 437 newspaper articles that were collected using a full-text keyword search of the EBSCO Host database, which indexes articles from the Leader Post and the Star Phoenix. In general, the results reveal that Aboriginal peoples are regularly portrayed as problematic; either as having problems themselves, or as causing problems for non-Aboriginal peoples. The results support the view that race is socially constructed and demonstrate that "race," through media discourse, can become a socially acceptable explanation for social problems.

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This thesis is dedicated to the special people in my life who didn't live to see it completed:

Ivy Maslin 1912 - 2000
Jack Kellett 1936 - 2000

I loved and admired both of you for different qualities, thank you for believing that this and other challenges I've encountered in my life were well within my ability.

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1.1 Introduction

Mass media influences public opinion; it serves as an important source of information, influencing people's judgments, beliefs, and values (Troynas, 1984). Media coverage of minority groups has been shown to be frequently incomplete, often negative, and generally stereotypical (Henry et al., 2000; Fleras and Elliott, 1996; Khaki and Prasad, 1988; van Dijk, 1988; Scanlion, 1977). Henry, et al. (2000) argue that media reproduce and reinforce racist ideology through negative stereotyping of racial minorities, by stressing news that marginalizes or criminalizes them. Media information is especially important in shaping minority/majority relationships because the public often has little or no alternative information about minority groups, and stereotypic reporting of those groups becomes the sole source from which majority members learn about minorities (van Dijk, 1993; van Dijk, 1988). In this way, a stereotypical understanding of minority group members is developed and, serving as a substitution for reality, is projected onto the "other" (hooks, 1990). Over time, this distorted learning experience is internalized by majority members, and the stereotypic understanding of minorities forms enduring values (Armstrong, 1984). Fleras and Elliott (1996:191) have demonstrated that the media perpetuate a negative stereotypical image of Aboriginal Peoples, projecting them as " 'problem people' who 'have problems' or 'create problems'."

Two schools of thought frame the study of race. Biological notions of race rely on the identification of inheritable or phenotypic traits in order to classify different racial groups. The alternative perspective views race as a social construction where the dominant group associates phenotypic traits with undesirable behaviors, and the minority group is held responsible for social problems (Satzewich, 1998; Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1992). Advocates of defining race as a social construction have argued that the social construction of race is based not only on the racialization of phenotypic or cultural traits but also on the undesirable behaviors of group members (Li, 1994).

It is difficult to define succinctly the Aboriginal population of Canada because of their many different tribal affiliations, legal definitions and terms of self-identification. I have chosen to refer to the First Peoples of Canada as Aboriginal Peoples. I believe Aboriginal Peoples to be an inclusive term, recognizing the diversity of the peoples that this name covers. Furthermore, this is the term used in the 1982 Constitution of Canada that defines "'aboriginal peoples of Canada' to include Indian, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada" (Canada, 1982). I use the term Aboriginal Peoples to refer to a more varied list of people than the Constitution defines as Aboriginal Peoples, but I have used the Constitutional definition as a starting point for a more inclusive definition. Although I recognize the diverse and dynamic nature of these peoples, this thesis will focus on how the media and the public often identify them as a singular group. Research indicates that in the mainstream media "coverage of aboriginal issues is a monocultural blot on a multicultural society" (Medows, 1993 from Fleras and Kunz, 2001).

little or no cost. Newspaper articles remain readily accessible for years after the initial publication in the many libraries that maintain newspaper indexes, microfiche, and computer databases.

Combined, the StarPhoenix and Leader Post sell about 138,000 newspapers every Friday, making it the day with the highest readership (Williams, 2002; Leader Post, 2002). From Monday through Thursday readership drops and the newspapers generally sell about 57,000 newspapers each, per day (Williams, 2002). The circulation of these two newspapers is extensive throughout the south and central regions of the province with the Leader Post distributing primarily to the southern region of the province, and the StarPhoenix distributing to most of central Saskatchewan and some of northern Saskatchewan (Williams, 2002; Leader Post, 2002). The south/central cut-off line between the two newspapers is at Davidson, Saskatchewan with the Leader Post distributing south of Davidson, and the StarPhoenix north of Davidson (Williams, 2002). The circulation of these two newspapers is significantly less in the Northern regions with only limited circulation in or north of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan (Williams, 2002). Given the relatively small population of the province of Saskatchewan, the combined Friday newspaper circulation would reach roughly 37.0 percent of the 372,820 households in the province (Canada, 1996a). This is a conservative estimate of the number of people who actually have access to one of these daily newspapers as many of the newspapers are purchased by businesses, schools and libraries where numerous people read them.

Given the capacity of the media to inform the public about minority groups and to construct the public's perception of ethnic or racial minority groups, scholars must question how and why the media are able to operate without greater public scrutiny. In

answering the question, "how are Aboriginal Peoples socially constructed in the media?" one is inevitably drawn to examine the way in which the media operate. Issues of media operation which will be examined in this study include journalist objectivity, the filters (or factors) used in determining *newsworthiness*, the role of media corporations in determining *newsworthiness*, and the accessibility or lack thereof, of subordinate group members to the press. The examination of these issues in the context of the social construction of the "race" of Aboriginal Peoples will serve to demonstrate how "race," through media discourse, can become for the public, a socially acceptable explanation for social problems.

1.3 The Importance of Research into Media Coverage of Ethnic and Racial Minorities

The media's ability to influence public opinion has been well documented (Henry and Tator, forthcoming; Wortley, 2002; Fleras and Kunz, 2001; Henry et al., 2000; Fleras, 1994). The influence of the media on public opinion should not be underestimated. van Dijk (1993) charges that the role of the media in reinforcing and reproducing racism is as essential as their role in political, social and ideological reproduction in contemporary society. The media assumes this fundamental role in reproducing racism due to their ability to mould and change the social mind (van Dijk, 1993).

The media is widely acknowledged as a powerful tool with the ability to educate, entertain, and influence attitudes and beliefs, to mould social norms, and to disseminate information (Fleras and Kunz, 2001; Winter, 1997; Khaki and Prasad, 1988). The media - owning elite use the media to exercise their power and influence , seek legitimation and manufacture consensus (van Dijk, 1993). The media, including literature and films,

1.2 Research Question

The media portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples and its influence on public opinion contributes meaning to the term "Aboriginal," a term which has become almost synonymous with high unemployment, economic and social marginalization, and criminal behavior. Peter Li (1998:117) argues that through the social construction of race the term "Indians or Native peoples becomes associated not only with a racial origin of a remote past, but also signifies a contemporary people which is economically deprived, socially marginal and politically militant." This study looks at how the notion of "Aboriginal Peoples" is socially constructed in the media. Based on Frances Henry's insightful analysis of the media and its role in racializing minorities (Henry, et al., 2000), I examine the way two Saskatchewan daily newspapers, the StarPhoenix and the Leader Post, cover Aboriginal Peoples in terms of frequency of reporting and the way in which they are portrayed. This research asesses the nature of media coverage of Aboriginal Peoples with respect to news stories, feature articles, editorials, and letters to the editor during a three-month period between May 4, 2000[1] and July 31, 2000.

The print media have an important position in relation to other forms of media due to their enduring nature. Other forms of media such as television news broadcasts allow only seconds in which to highlight aspects of a news story, preventing the audience from easily reviewing the material at a later date. Newspapers provide readers with the opportunity to know about the events of the day at a glance. But they also provide the reader with the opportunity to go back and reread information. Furthermore, newspapers provide the opportunity to easily research an event, issue or time period at

[1] May 4, 2000 marks the first day in May of 2000 where an article featuring an Aboriginal keyword was retrieved from the EBSCO Host database.

have the ability to influence the construction of personal identities, self-esteem, and ideas about the world around us; and they serve to reinforce dichotomizing ideas of "us" and "them" (Henry and Tator, forthcoming). Given the media's ability to mould public opinion, community norms, and self-identity, the examination of media portrayal of ethnic and racial minorities is vital to the understanding of the method and process by which racist ideology is reinforced and reproduced in communities by the media.

A substantial body of research examines not only what information about ethnic and racial minorities is included in the media portrayal of these groups, but also what information about those groups is missing from media coverage (Fleras, 1994; Canada, 1996b; Khaki and Prasad, 1988). Media critics argue that the news media are controlled by "gatekeepers" who determine what events, or aspects of events, are newsworthy and what events are excluded (Bittle, 2001; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Winter, 1997). The gatekeepers' ability to control what events are "newsworthy" gives the media the ability to construct sometimes distorted images of ethnic and racial minorities, and to influence public opinion accordingly. By reporting only those events that fit the gatekeepers' profile, numerous events and details of events are excluded, providing decontextualized, ethnocentric, exaggerated or one-dimensional accounts of events (Bittle, 2001; Henry, et. al., 2000; Canada, 1996b; Canada, 1996c).

1.4 Direction of Research

Recent literature suggests that visible minorities are regularly portrayed, in Canadian newspapers in a highly negative and stereotypical manner (Fleras and Kunz, 2001; Henry, et al., 2000; Fleras and Elliott, 1996; Khaki and Prasad, 1988; van Dijk, 1988; Scanlion, 1977). This study offers an examination of the portrayal of Aboriginal

Peoples in two Saskatchewan daily newspapers: the StarPhoenix and the Leader Post. The theoretical concept of *race as a social construction* will be employed to explain the portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples in the print media of the province.

The remaining chapters of this thesis will proceed as follows: Chapter Two will provide an in-depth analysis of the theoretical concept of the social construction of race, the premise of which is that undesirable behaviours are racialized along with phenotypic traits (Li, 1994). An examination of the concept of hegemony and the role of monopoly control over the media will be incorporated to demonstrate the power of an elite few to produce news that supports the interests of the dominant class. Chapter Three will detail the methodology of this study, and will include a list and definitions of the characterizations used to classify media portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples. Chapters Four, Five, and Six will examine the empirical and qualitative findings of three common, recurrent portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples found in the course of this research: the negatively characterized, the stereotypically characterized, and the positively characterized. Chapter Six will also include a small group of mixed characterizations. Finally Chapter Seven will summarize the findings of this studies w ork.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is limited to newspaper articles, editorials, and letters to the editor that referred to Aboriginal populations in North America, and were published between May 4, 2000 and July 31, 2000 in either the StarPhoenix or the Leader Post. It is important to note that this analysis refers only to those articles that made explicit reference to the nine Aboriginal keywords used in the database search. Articles that feature Aboriginal surnames or pictures of Aboriginal Peoples, or that

implied messages about Aboriginal Peoples without making explicit reference to at least one of the keywords, were not selected by the full text keyword search and have, therefore, not been included.

2. Theoretical approach

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an in-depth analysis of the theoretical concept of *the social construction* of race. Theory suggests that race is not biologically grounded but instead that racial divisions are socially determined. Proponents of the social constructionist perspective argue that there is as much genetic variation within racial groups as between them, and that there is significant overlap between racial groups (Rex, 1970). This reality lends support to the position that racial categories are socially determined based on political, social and cultural criteria. An important argument of this perspective is that undesirable behaviors become racialized along with phenotypic traits (Li, 1994). The racializing of undesirable behaviors serves to teach the public about members of a specific "racial" group and the type of behavior that can be expected of group members, thus fostering a stereotypical understanding of group members.

The social construction of race relies on the dissemination of information about racial group members, which serves to reinforce and reproduce ideas about this racial group in the minds of the public. The concept of hegemony refers to the ability of the wealthy and powerful to dominate other groups by having their ideas and assumptions internalized by the subordinate groups. Ideally, the subordinate group do not recognize these ideas or assumptions as being in the best interests of the dominant group, but they believe that the ideas are generated by common sense (Gitlin, 1980). Supporters of this

perspective argue that there is a very thin line between hegemony and coercion (Gitlin, 1980).

Examination of the Gramscian concept of hegemony, and the role of monopoly control over the media will be used to demonstrate the power of an elite few to produce news that supports the interests of the dominant class. A privileged few own the majority of media sources and those few have the ability to influence, directly and indirectly, the type of material that is disseminated by the media. The concept of hegemony will assist in the understanding of the effect of the media monopoly and how they interact to form the image of racial minority group members. In short, I will examine the purpose for which the media highlights events that feature negative and stereotypical portrayals of subordinate group members.

2.2 The Social Construction of Race

The origin of the word *race* has been traced back nearly 500 years to a poem entitled The Dance of the Sevin Deidly Sins written by William Dunbar in 1508 (Banton, 1967; Banton, 1998; Satzewich, 1998). The usage of the word "racis" in the poem denoted a class of people whom Dunbar listed as those who followed "envy" (Banton, 1967; Banton, 1998). The term race was first used as a basic taxonomy of humankind in 1684 by François Bernier, a French physician and traveller (Banton, 1967). Bernier described "four or five" races of people whose differences were so remarkable that he found it to be a "foundation for division of the earth," but he drew no conclusions about the nature of the people (Banton, 1967). In the nearly five hundred years since the term "race" first appeared it has been "used to refer to lineage, to biologically distinct groups of people, and most recently, to a socially constructed label

used to describe certain patterns of physical and genetic difference" (Satzewich, 1998:27). The primary focus of this section is to examine the concept of race as a social construction, but in order to do so effectively the notions of race as lineage and race as biological will be briefly examined.

Prior to the late eighteenth century, the term race referred to the idea of lineage, where groups of people were categorized by having a common history (Banton, 1998; Satzewich, 1998). The French aristocracy, "defined themselves as a race, and saw themselves as racially distinct from others in France by virtue of their common blood and descent" (Satzewich, 1998:27).

Satzewich (1998:28) observes, that "by the late eighteenth century the term race started to be used to refer to groups of people who were believed to be inherently and biologically different." The notion of biologically determined race has received harsh criticism and has been rejected by many researchers. A growing movement of researchers consider race to be a social construction rather than biologically determined (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1992; Li, 1994; Satzewich, 1998; Li, 1998). The critique of the biologically grounded notion of race focuses on the argument that racial groups are only statistically distinguishable, and that there is as much variation within racial groups as between them (Rex, 1970):

> Biologists concluded that the human species had a single origin and that the so-called races of mankind were statistically distinguishable groups only. Thus it was possible to classify groups of human beings in terms of the predominance of certain indices, such as the cephalic or nasal index, skin colour, hair type and so on, provided that one recognized the considerable overlap between one group and another. It was not thought, however, that such physical differences were correlated with behaviour or psychological differences, hence the notion that 'race' could be used to *justify* unequal treatment was rejected. The concept of race as biologists used it was seen to be irrelevant to the explanation of political differences amongst human beings, and it was suggested that the explanation why

> such differences were regarded as due to race were best left to the sociologists (Hiernaux, 1965 from Rex, 1986:19)

Despite the critique of the biological notion of race, social researchers have recognized that the idea of biologically determined race had taken on meaning in society (Banton, 1967; Li, 1994; Li, 1998). In the process of being racialized into a specific racial group, group members often encounter racial oppression and unequal treatment and from this a common sense of solidarity or peoplehood results (Li, 1994):

> The evidence from Biologists indicates that the socially significant group differences are culturally and not genetically transmitted ... Beliefs about the nature of race - whether true or false - still have a considerable social significance, and when a category is labelled in the popular mind by racial terminology rather than by religious or class criteria, certain predictable consequences ensue (Banton, 1967: 4).

Essentially the same forces that racialize phenotypic traits (and therefore socially construct race groups) also serve to strengthen in minority group members the sense of racial consciousness and self-identification with that racial group (Li, 1994).

Bolaria and Li (1985:15) suggest that race is a social construct "produced and maintained by differential power between a dominant group and a subordinate group." Refuting the idea that race is a biological fact, scholars argue that racial oppression is a by-product of historical, political, material, social and economic conditions (Bolaria and Li, 1985; Miles, 1993). Further, it has been argued that, racism flourished with the expansion of capitalism, "because there were obvious economic benefits in the use of colored labor" (Bolaria and Li 1985:16). With the rise of capitalism, Europeans harvested these economic benefits by capitalizing on racial prejudice and exploiting the labor of visible minority workers (Cox, 1948; Bolaria and Li, 1985).

Banton (1967) describes the way races were identified in terms of role signs rather than being based on biology. Banton's perspective describes race as a collection

of role signs that serve to signify a person's role to others, just as differences in clothing or behaviour could be used to distinguish sex and class roles noting; "an approach to race relations from the standpoint of social science requires that race be viewed not as a biological category, but as a sign by which a social category is identified" (Banton, 1967: 5).

The social construction of race appears to serve a function in that it may strengthen the bonds between members of the dominant group by differentiating them from members of other "races." By "advancing racial differences believed to be primordial in origin... the social construction of race produces both a social boundary of exclusion and a common group of identity" (Li, 1994:15):

> In the social construction of race, not only phenotypic and cultural traits of the group being racialized are paired with certain undesirable behaviours, but also in the process, everyday language and common precepts take on special meaning by way of designing the difference between the races (Li, 1994:15).

By racializing behaviours along with phenotypic traits, the dominant group is able to justify the unequal treatment of racialized group members based on what is viewed as the shortcomings of those members. This study will argue that the media portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples serves to help socially construct the negative image of Aboriginal Peoples. Using its monopolistic control of the media, the dominant group is able to reinforce and reproduce the hegemonic ideology by focusing on the negative acts of the minority group.

2.3 Hegemony

The central argument of the Gramscian theory of hegemony is that the ruling class dominates subordinate classes by using ideology, both directly and indirectly, to

shape popular consent (Gitlin, 1980). Ideologies are essentially a set of ideas that are held by a certain social group that serve to advance the interests of that group. The ideologies of the most powerful group are referred to as dominant ideologies (Clement, 1975). The ruling class is able to mould popular ideology because it holds monopoly control of the media used to disseminate ideology (Gitlin, 1980). Gitlin (1980: 253) describes the Gramscian concept of hegemony as follows:

> Hegemony is a ruling class's (or alliance's) domination of subordinate classes and groups through the elaboration and penetration of ideology (ideas and assumptions) into their common sense and everyday practices; it is the systematic (but not necessarily or even usually deliberate) engineering of mass consent to establish order.

Gitlin (1980: 254) concludes that a hegemonic reality "seeps into popular common sense and gets reproduced there; it may even appear to be generated by that common sense." In short, when hegemony is successful it should be virtually undetectable (Skea, 1993). Using the media the public is subtly coerced into doing, of their own free will, what the elite want (van Dijk, 1997).

Hegemony is intimately linked to coercion, so much so that it is difficult to distinguish exactly where hegemony begins and coercion ends (Giltlin, 1980). Clement (1975) argues that the more effective the media in influencing values and achieving conformity using hegemony, less is the need for more coercive forms of social control. When hegemony is successfully orchestrated, it can help to establish a specific way of thinking in society (Porter, 1965). The media serves as an ideal source for hegemonic control, and command of the media allows the elite to manipulate some aspects of education, knowledge and discourse (van Dijk, 1997). Wallace Clement (1975:281)

uses the myth of widespread Canadian wealth to illustrate how media coverage can establish a specific impression in the media:

> One of the effects of the mass media is to perpetuate the myth that society's advantages are widespread and enjoyed by all. It is frequently suggested that Canada could do better by the Biafrans or the children of India, but how often are the native peoples of Canada or the children in the slums of Canada's major cities subject to the same kinds of national campaigns?

In short, Clement is identifying the ability of the media to bring attention to one situation and to overlook an equally appalling local situation, when it serves the needs of the dominant class. This ability to bring attention to specific issues stems from the media's determination of what constitutes newsworthiness; by selecting items that suit the capitalist agenda the media filter what events garner the attention of the public.

2.4 The Media Gatekeeper – News Filtered for the Capitalist Agenda

The mass media educate, inform, amuse and disseminate ideological beliefs. In a world of concentrated wealth and class conflict, the media also serve to systematically disseminate propaganda (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). The structure of news production is geared towards reproduction of the power of white elite in terms of access, control, prestige, opinions, definitions and concerns (van Dijk, 1993).

News is socially constructed - based on the selection of *newsworthy* events (Troynas, 1984). The process by which newsworthiness is determined is so ingrained in society that news people and the public in general often operate under an understanding that the media are objective in their coverage. Journalists argue that they select the topics for news coverage based on professional news values (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). These news values support the view that news items are newsworthy because of

their immediacy, dramatic nature and degree of sensationalism (Troynas, 1984). When this is the standard for newsworthiness it is understandable why, when media coverage of minorities is included, the media coverage is mostly negative with an emphasis on crime and racial conflict (Troynas, 1984). The media has the contradictory task of *objectively* reporting news events while seeking profits in an economic sector seeking to reinforce and reproduce ideologies that serve elite interests (Clement, 1975).

The power of the media to influence public opinion and ideology has been linked to the media's ability to limit what is reported as news in terms of its gatekeeping function (Clement, 1975; Herman and Chomsky, 1988):

> In the words of the Senate Committee on Mass Media: "The power of the press ... is the power of selection" and it argues about media owners: "They are *not* spectators. They control the presentation of the news, and therefore have a vast and perhaps disproportionate say in how our society defines itself" (Clement, 1975:282).

The power to select what becomes news, allows newsmakers to publish stories that are one-dimensional. Resulting in news that caricaturizes people or events, and frequently offering only the most sensationalistic aspects of the story.

2.4.1 The Filters of News

Herman and Chomsky (1988) identify key news filters. As it appears in newspapers and other forms of media, news is the cleansed product that has passed through each of these filters. Three of these filters will be discussed in detail in this section. The first relates to ownership and profit orientation; the second refers to the influence of advertisers; the third examines the journalistic preference given to expert sources.

First, newsworthiness is determined by "the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass media firms" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 2). Since the media are a capitalist enterprise where economic profitability is the primary goal, news stories are selected that will facilitate that goal (Porter, 1965; Clement, 1975; Herman and Chomsky, 1988). This filters importance is enhanced by the monopoly control of the media; monopoly control has been shown to reduce the diversity of news (Winter, 1997). The question of monopoly control over the media has been studied by numerous scholars (Porter, 1965; Clement, 1975; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Chomsky, 1991) whose work suggests that the media monopoly shapes the coverage of news stories and maintains the dominant ideology. It is clear from the above discussions of media gatekeepers, hegemony in the media, and the social construction of race, that if a media monopoly exists it can seriously limit and skew the media coverage received by a group or event.

Concentration of media ownership in Canada has reached the point of a media monopoly where few companies own most of the newspaper and television stations in the country Conrad Black's takeover of the Saskatchewan newspaper business in the mid 1990's is an example of monopolistic control of the media. In 1981, at the time of the Kent Royal Commission on Newspapers, it was reported that Black owned less than one percent of provincial daily newspapers in Saskatchewan. By 1995 he owned 100 percent of the daily newspapers in the province (Winter, 1997). Black's company, Hollinger Inc., announced the sale of the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix among other papers in the chain to CanWest Global Communications on July 31, 2000, and the sale became official November 16, 2000 (Southham Inc., 2000). This sale effectively transferred the daily newspaper monopoly in Saskatchewan from Hollinger Inc. to

CanWest Global Communications. The effect of a monopoly is to reduce the number of alternative perspectives or voices that are disseminated.

The firms that hold monopolistic control of the media are controlled by very rich and powerful people or by high-level managers who are constrained by the expectations placed upon them by the owners in a drive for profit (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). These constraints are amplified when journalists, who seek more prestigious assignments and promotions, practice self-censorship, or write stories that they anticipate the editors or manager will like (Winter, 1997). Journalists may learn quickly that if they want to advance in their competitive field they must focus their attention on covering stories that will be printed and are potential front-page items (Winter, 1997). In this way, a journalist becomes an "agent for the political-economic interests of those who employ [him/her]" (Winter, 1997: 85).

The second news filter is advertising; because advertising is "the primary income source of the mass media" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). The argument about the filtering effect of advertising goes back to the business model that was addressed in the discussion of the first filter. In this case, advertisers help offset the cost of news production. Without advertising in the newspaper, for instance, the selling price of each newspaper would need to reflect the cost of creating that newspaper. Advertising dollars allow newspaper publishers to sell their product for significantly less than the cost of production, and still generate a profit (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

Advertisers choose newspapers that are popular with likely consumers of the advertisers' goods. Advertisers endeavor to reach the largest possible audience, a majority group in society. The majority of society is more likely to buy a newspaper

that represents the dominant ideology. Newspapers that appeal to an affluent clientele are placed at an advantage over fringe newspapers whose readers are of modest means (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). "One advertising executive stated in 1856 that some journals are poor vehicles because 'their readers are not purchasers, and any money thrown upon them is so much thrown away'" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:15). Advertisers choose to patronize media outlets that uphold their own principles; large corporations rarely support media that engage in critique corporations (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

The third media filter is "the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by those primary sources and agents of power" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:18). Van Dijk (1993:252) argues that "few properties of the news are as revealing about the practices of news-making as the quotations." Quotations tell us who the journalist has been talking to, and who is considered a credible source (van Dijk, 1993; Gitlin, 1980). "In virtually all stages of news production minorities are excluded, marginalized, discredited or ignored" (van Dijk, 1993: 247). The powerful are able to influence what the journalists write by hosting press conferences, therefore suggesting that the topic of the press conference is critical (van Dijk, 1997). Furthermore, the influence of the powerful at press conferences serves to help overpower the voices of the working class and minority groups. Journalists are desensitized to the perspectives, of these less powerful groups (Gitlin, 1980).

These media filters interact with each other to filter events until only the most newsworthy items, having passed through each of the successive filters, are printed (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). It is the ability of the media to filter the news, and the

hegemonic ideology driving newsmakers, which serves to limit the images of minority group members in the media and, in turn, to socially construct the image of Aboriginal Peoples in the media. Those aspects of Aboriginal Peoples' lives that find their way into the media do not give an accurate picture of that population; rather, only the most sensational, most *newsworthy* aspects of Aboriginal life appear in the news. Articles about Aboriginal Peoples that focus on the sensational, criminal, or problematic aspects of Aboriginal life help to sell newspapers and thereby help newspapers to meet the capitalist agenda of the media owners. These types of articles serve to expose the public to the solitary viewpoint that the Aboriginal population is "problematic." It is this exposure, and the absence of contrary perspective, that serves to assign the undesirable circumstances and behavior of individual group members to *all* members of the minority group; and the exposure links this behavior with phenotypic traits traditionally associated with minority group members.

2.5 Conclusion

Defining race as a social construction explains how phenotypic traits and individual behaviours or characteristics are racialized, and how these racialized images serve to create stereotypes used by the public to judge minority group members. Research into the media portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples has shown that criminal behaviour and economic and social marginalization are commonly associated with this group (Henry and Tator, forthcoming; Fleras and Elliott, 1996; Fleras, 1994). These images, that frequently appear in the media, serve to construct and reinforce an image of Aboriginal Peoples that is defined, in large part, by the problems that *individual*

members of this group have, and the problems that they *reportedly* cause for Canadian society.

The dissemination of hegemonic ideology serves to maintain the position of the powerful in society at the expense of subordinate groups. Often this process is so integrated into society that it is not recognized as serving the needs of the dominant group at the expense of others. Hegemony has been described as a seemingly "common sense" approach; the public does not recognize that hegemony finds its way into common sense and is reproduced there.

The role of the media gatekeeper is to maintain the dominant ideology by filtering out stories that do not meet the agenda of the corporate elite who hold monopoly control of the media. This filtering is done on both a conscious and "unconscious" level, and at many stages; one of the stages entails selecting stories that will help to meet the economic goals of the media corporations. Focusing on the sensational aspects of an event while disregarding the context in which the event occurs helps meet the capitalist need for sensationalistic news that works to sell newspapers. Often this filtering serves to portray only a single dimension of the group or event featured in the article. In the case of ethnic and racial minority group members, the filtered news often features only the very negative and stereotypical accounts of the community.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Discourse analysis methodology was used to examine the print media portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples. A total of 437 articles were drawn from the EBSCO Host database, a full text database that indexes articles from the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix. The search criteria included the presence, in each article, of at least one of nine words referring to Aboriginal Peoples or Aboriginal issues. The nine keywords were: Aboriginal, Indian, Native, First Nation, Metis, Eskimo, Inuit, Inuu, and Indigenous.

The articles returned using the full text keyword search were examined to determine if they met the scope of the project. Once the sample was reduced to only the in-scope articles each article was read and coded into categories based on the characterization of Aboriginal Peoples that appeared in the article. Coding information was organized using a computer spreadsheet program (Microsoft Excel). The database included information such as the date, number of articles per day, day of the week, newspaper of publication, article title, characterizations, copyright, and article type.

In the initial coding of each article, the Aboriginal "subject" of the article was identified. Once identified, the characterization of the Aboriginal subject was determined, and the article was subsequently assigned into a particular category of "character." These character categories consisted of ten recurrent characterizations of

Aboriginal Peoples that appeared in the sample: the ten characters are: the "Troublemaker," the "Criminal," the "Crook," the "Typical Indian," the "Victim," the "Manager," the "Good Indian," the "Cultural Icon," the "Athlete," and the "Benefactor."

Each of the ten characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples identified in this analysis was classified as to its primary portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples. These primary portrayal categories have been named "Negative Characterizations," "Stereotypical Characterizations," "Positive Characterizations," and "Mixed Characterizations." These characterizations were used to facilitate discussion of the portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in the media. Findings of this research are presented in the analysis chapters to follow. Each analysis chapter will focus on a primary characterization.

There are several reasons why this study focuses on the portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples in Saskatchewan newspapers rather than on the portrayal of all minority groups in these newspapers. Firstly, in 1995, Aboriginal Peoples accounted for 13.5 percent of the population of Saskatchewan, approximately 135,000 people (FSIN, 1997). Given the relatively large proportion of Aboriginal Peoples in the province, it follows that there may be substantial interest for provincial newspapers to cover Aboriginal-related stories. Because Aboriginal Peoples represent a significant proportion of the provincial population, it is reasonable to assume that media in general and newspapers in particular would have an interest in covering news events involving, or relating to, Aboriginal people. There is also a great deal of public interest in reporting on Aboriginal Peoples, as population projections suggest that Aboriginal Peoples are the fastest growing ethnic or racial group in the province. A project funded by the FSIN (1997) indicated that the Aboriginal population of Saskatchewan could reach nearly 400,000 by 2041.

Secondly, the rather frequent reporting on Aboriginal Peoples by provincial newspapers may indicate that the newspapers may have developed some expertise and sensitivity towards Aboriginal issues. Thus, stereotypic images of Aboriginal Peoples reported by provincial newspapers, if any, should be a conservative estimate of those reported by other newspapers that have not had substantial experience reporting on Aboriginal Peoples.

Finally, I have chosen to use two daily Saskatchewan newspapers to gain a broader look at the messages about Aboriginal Peoples that the residents of Saskatchewan are receiving. This is important because the proportion of Aboriginal Peoples in the provincial population continues to grow, and as it does, issues linked to racial tension based on the socially constructed images of Aboriginal Peoples will have a larger impact on provincial society.

3.2 Keyword Search Criteria

In an attempt to capture as many newspaper articles as possible during my study period, I generated a list of nine keywords that I felt encompassed most of the common identifiers used for Aboriginal Peoples. The keyword search began with the word Aboriginal and the terms used to define Aboriginal in the 1982 Constitution of Canada: Indian, Metis and Inuit. Further, when an article was selected based on reference to one of these keywords it was examined to see if it also made reference to other words describing Aboriginal Peoples. When these words were found they were added to the keyword search, which then resulted in further articles and more keywords. Essentially, the keyword search was the result of a snowball sampling technique with one keyword leading to others. It is possible that some articles referring to Aboriginal Peoples may

have been missed, as the nomenclature used to describe this diverse population is vast. Aboriginal populations are notoriously difficult to define. A term such as Status Indian carries with it specific legal entitlements and, in the past, significant restrictions. Many of the other names used to define Aboriginal populations are often terms of self-identification and are dynamic in the sense that the preferred term of self-definition can shift over time.

Despite the effort to include as many names possible for Aboriginal Peoples some have most certainly not been included in the keyword search. First, names signifying different tribal affiliations such as Cree, Sioux and Dene have not been included here because they did not appear in the sample of articles that was used to generate further keywords. Aboriginal surnames were not included in the keyword search for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the vast number of possible surnames. Additionally, there would be considerable imprecision in determining the ethnicity of a population consisting of a significant proportion of Metis peoples by surname alone. I argue that the use of nine keywords built in a degree of redundancy as numerous articles make reference to more than one of the keywords and were, therefore, repeatedly returned by the keyword search.

3.3 Selection of Data Source and Timeframe

As the goal of this study is to examine the coverage that Aboriginal Peoples regularly receive, as opposed to coverage punctuated by a specific event, I wanted to examine all articles appearing over an extended period of time. In consideration of both time and fiscal constraints, I opted to use a database to access the articles used in this analysis. The database keyword search allowed for a more extensive search of articles

over a wider time span than could have otherwise been attempted. Without the database, to recover the 437 articles that the keyword search returned, I would have had to manually examine thousands of articles. Also allowing a keyword search to locate the articles reduced the opportunity for articles to be missed due to coder fatigue and human error.

The timeframe for this analysis was selected somewhat randomly with the intention of examining the coverage that Aboriginal Peoples regularly receive as opposed to coverage punctuated by a specific event. Selection of a timeframe for analysis was somewhat constrained by the use of the EBSCO Host database that began indexing articles in May 2000. A three-month time frame was used in a further attempt to avoid the sample being dominated by one-news events. Initially, a sixmonth timeframe was proposed; however, the volume of articles retrieved in the first three months of the sample was larger than initially expected and many characterizations of Aboriginal peoples appeared consistently across topics.

The articles upon which this study was mounted were selected using the EBSCO Host database, which was accessed through the Saskatoon Public Library. This database was chosen because it was one of the few regularly updated databases that indexed articles from both the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix. When these articles were collected in early December 2000 the EBSCO Host database featured articles that originally had been published only two weeks earlier, in late November 2000, which indicated a very current database.

Selection of articles within the EBSCO Host database was based on the explicit reference to the following keywords in no particular order: Aboriginal, Native, Indian, First Nation, Métis, Inuit, Innu, Eskimo or Indigenous. The nine keywords that were

used in this research will collectively be referred to as the Aboriginal keywords. Two search expansion options of the EBSCO Host database were utilized in this research. Results include information gathered using the "also search for related words" option that includes the synonyms and plurals of keywords, and the "search within full text articles" option that searches for keywords within the full text of articles, including abstract and citation information (EBSCO Host, 2001).

It is important to note that only those articles that make explicit reference to the Aboriginal keywords were collected or analyzed. Articles that featured Aboriginal surnames or pictures of Aboriginal Peoples, or that implied messages about Aboriginal Peoples without making explicit reference to at least one of the nine Aboriginal keywords were not selected by the full text keyword search, and therefore have not been included. This method of data collection returned articles that focused primarily on Aboriginal Peoples as groups rather than as individuals.

The scope of this research is limited to newspaper articles that refer to Aboriginal Peoples of North America. This includes news, editorials, feature reports, letters to the editor, and columns. Any items that do not fall within the defined scope of the research or any items coded as advertisements or "calendar of events" items were excluded. Due to the nature of a full text keyword search not all articles that were returned by the search met the scope of this project. Each article that was returned was thoroughly examined to determine if it met the scope of the project. Table 3.2.1 indicates the number of articles that were returned in the keyword search and indicates if they were classified as "in scope," "out of scope," or if the articles were returned multiple times because more than one of the Aboriginal keywords appeared in an article.

Table 3.3.1: Articles Retrieved from May 1, 2000 to July 31, 2000 in Keyword Search by Newspaper

	StarPhoenix (n=639)	Leader Post (n=548) %
In Scope Articles	255 [39.9%]	182 [33.2%]
Out of Scope Articles	232 [36.3%]	259 [47.3%]
Repeated Articles	152 [23.8%]	107 [19.5%]

Many of the articles that were classified as "out of scope" made reference to sports teams including the Edmonton Eskimos and the Cleveland Indians. Additionally, a number of articles made reference to indigenous populations from around the world, and to items relating to the country of India and inhabitants of that country. While these articles did make reference to at least one of the Aboriginal keywords, the focus of the articles was not Aboriginal Peoples of North America, and thus, did not meet the specified scope of the project. Articles that were deemed to fall outside of the scope of this project, and repeats of "in scope" articles, were discarded.

The in-scope articles returned were primarily news articles. Table 3.2.2 indicates the percentage of articles with the Aboriginal keywords by the type of story that was reported. Both the StarPhoenix and the Leader Post classified the vast majority of the articles as news articles: 45.9 percent and 58.2 percent respectively. The classification as to story type were made by each newspaper and printed in the byline along with the author's name and the city, to which article refers. The remaining articles were classified primarily as business articles, columns, letters and crime articles. The mix of articles that was included in the analysis, illustrated in Table 3.2.2, demonstrates that the

coverage of Aboriginal Peoples collected using the full text keyword search represents a range of article types.

Table 3.3.2: Articles returned by Story Type

Newspaper / Story Type	StarPhoenix (n=255)	Leader Post (n=182)
News	117 [45.9%]	106 [58.2%]
Business	35 [13.7%]	21 [11.5%]
Column	29 [11.4%]	18 [9.9%]
Letter	28 [11.0%]	6 [3.3%]
Crime	20 [7.8%]	16 [8.8%]
Sports	13 [5.0%]	4 [2.2%]
Opinion	5 [2.0%]	3 [1.6%]
Review	2 [0.8%]	1 [0.6%]
Editorial	3 [1.2%]	6 [3.3%]
Feature	2 [0.8%]	0 [0.0%]
Statistics	1 [0.4%]	1 [0.6%]
Total	100.0	100.0

3.4 Coding Typology

Initially a coding scheme based on the topic, theme and message of each article was used. However, because the topics of the articles analyzed in this study range from athletics to alcoholism, that scheme soon became too complicated to be useful. However, in the process of using the initial coding typology, recurrent characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples became clear. These recurrent characterizations were then turned into a separate coding typology that worked effectively to manage the volume of articles

and the StarPhoenix. Each of these articles makes explicit reference to at least one of nine Aboriginal keywords. These articles were coded based on the characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples that occurred in the articles. Each of these characterizations is described in detail in the following chapters. The analysis has been separated into three chapters based on the overall portrayal of the group of characters. Each characterization is defined according to the criteria for inclusion in that category. For each character, two case studies are presented as a representation of the other articles found in the category.

The analysis of 437 articles over a three month time period is useful as it provides a systematic examination of all articles that make explicit reference to the most commonly used terms to describe Aboriginal Peoples. This type of systematic analysis would not have been possible without the use of a keyword search due to the volume of articles examined. The analysis resulting from this style of article collection allows the researcher to examine the over-arching portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples that persists independent of individual article topics. The repetitive viewing of these portrayals in the media by the public serves to reinforce and reproduce stereotypic and negative understandings of Aboriginal Peoples by members of the public.

4. Negative Portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in Saskatchewan Newspapers

4.1 Introduction

Negative media portrayals of minority group members have been well documented (Fleras and Kunz, 2001; Henry, et al., 2000; Fleras and Elliott, 1996; Khaki and Prasad, 1988; van Dijk, 1988; Scanlion, 1977). This analysis of 437 articles from the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix shows that roughly 42 percent of articles that featured explicit reference to at least one of the nine Aboriginal keywords negatively portrayed Aboriginal Peoples. The three character types comprising this category are the "Troublemaker," the "Crook" and the "Criminal." These characters account for 55 percent of the 56 front-page news stories that featured references to Aboriginal Peoples. Frequency tables representing the appearance of each characterization and the frequency of front-page coverage of each characterization will be presented in this chapter. Based on the frequency of negative portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples and the front-page coverage of those negative images, it is found that the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix sensationalize negative images of Aboriginal Peoples. These newspapers portray Aboriginal Peoples as demanding, unreasonable, corrupt, devious and criminal. Aboriginal Peoples are portrayed as people who are problematic, creating issues that the public must deal with. These findings are consistent with those of another study which found that Aboriginal Peoples were portrayed as "problem" people who make demands that may "imperil Canadian unity or the public coffers" (Fleras and Elliott, 1996: 368).

in the sample, allowing me to succinctly present my findings and maintain the richness and variation of the sample.

The typology based on characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples published in the Leader Post and StarPhoenix is comprised of ten characters, each of which is described at length in the following chapters. Other researchers examining the portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples in the media have identified characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples similar to the ones used in the present study. Henry et al. (2000:301) lists the following images of Aboriginal Peoples that appear in the media, "savages, alcoholics, uncivilized, uncultured, murderers, noble, needing a white saviour, [and] victim." The characterizations used were reduced to four categories to make the characterizations easier to understand: "Negative Characterizations," "Stereotypical Characterizations," "Positive Characterizations" and "Mixed Characterizations."

The first category, "Negative Characterizations," contains three characters: the "Troublemaker," the "Criminal," and the "Crook." Three characters also comprise the next category, "Stereotypical Characterizations:" the "Typical Indian," the "Victim," and the "Manager." The third category, "Positive Characterizations," is comprised of three characters: the "Good Indian," the "Cultural Icon," and the "Athlete." The final category is "Mixed Characterizations." The lone character in this category is the "Benefactor;" this character is considered to be of mixed characterization since the newspaper portrayal of this character changed dramatically mid-sample.

3.5 Conclusion

This study offers an analysis of 437 articles that were selected using the full-text keyword search of the EBSCO Host database that indexes articles from the Leader Post

4.2 Frequency of Articles and Front Page Coverage in the Sample

The quantitative findings that resulted from analysis of 437 articles drawn, using a keyword search, from the EBSCO Host database are presented in the following tables. Table 4.2.1 indicates the frequency with which each characterization was portrayed in the Leader Post, the StarPhoenix, and in the combined sample. This table illustrates the category totals for the "Negative," "Stereotypical," "Positive," and "Mixed" characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples. The frequency with which each individual characterization (category subtype) appeared is also illustrated. Table 4.2.2 indicates the frequency of front page coverage found in the Leader Post, the StarPhoenix, and the entire sample, for each character and each category. The results of these tables will be referred to in the analysis of each character.

TABLE 4.2.1 Frequency of Characterization of Aboriginal Peoples by each Newspaper and the Entire Sample

Characterization in newspaper	The StarPhoenix	% of category	The Leader Post	% of category	Entire Sample	% of entire sample
Negative characterization	*111*	*43.53*	*72*	*39.56*	*183*	*41.88*
The Troublemaker	68	26.67	36	19.78	104	23.80
The "Criminal"	15	5.88	18	9.89	33	7.55
The Crook	28	10.98	18	9.89	46	10.53
Stereotypical characterization	*71*	*27.84*	*52*	*28.57*	*123*	*28.15*
The "Typical" Indian	37	14.51	19	10.44	56	12.81
The "Victim"	15	5.88	9	4.95	24	5.49
The "Manager"	19	7.45	24	13.19	43	9.84
Positive characterization	*56*	*21.96*	*52*	*28.57*	*108*	*24.71*
Cultural Icon	16	6.27	26	14.29	42	9.61
The "Athlete"	9	3.53	4	2.20	13	2.97
The "good" Indian	31	12.16	22	12.09	53	12.13
Mixed characterization	*17*	*6.67*	*6*	*3.30*	*23*	*5.26*
The "Benefactor"	7	6.67	6	3.30	23	5.26
Total	255	*100.00*	182	*100.00*	437	*100.00*

TABLE 4.2.2 Frequency of Front Page Coverage in Newspapers by Characterization of Aboriginal Peoples

Characterization in newspaper	StarPhoenix	% of Category	Leader Post	% of Category	Entire Sample	% of Category
Negative characterization	17	51.5%	14	60.9%	31	55.4%
The "Troublemaker"	7	21.2%	5	21.7%	12	21.4%
The "Criminal"	0	0.0%	1	4.3%	1	1.8%
The "Crook"	10	30.3%	8	34.8%	18	32.1%
Stereotypical characterization	*9*	*27.3%*	*6*	*26.1%*	*15*	*26.8%*
The "Typical Indian"	1	3.0%	2	8.7%	3	5.4%
The "Victim"	4	12.1%	1	4.3%	5	8.9%
The "Manager"	4	12.1%	3	13.0%	7	12.5%
Positive characterization	*4*	*12.1%*	*3*	*13.0%*	*7*	*12.5%*
The "Cultural Icon"	0	0.0%	3	13.0%	3	5.4%
The "Athlete"	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
The "Good Indian"	4	12.1%	0	0.0%	4	7.1%
Mixed characterization	*3*	*9.1%*	*0*	*0.0%*	*3*	*5.4%*
The "Benefactor"	3	9.1%	0	0.0%	3	5.4%
Total	33	*100.0%*	23	*100.0%*	56	100.0%

This analysis of the portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples has been broken down into three chapters such that the "Negative" and "Stereotypical" characterizations are presented in separate chapters (Chapter 4 and 5) and the "Positive" and "Mixed" characterizations are presented together in Chapter 6. The analysis chapters are organized in this way to facilitate their presentation. Discussion of all characters in the same chapter would have become long and cumbersome. The "Positive" and "Mixed" Characterizations are discussed in the same chapter because the analysis of the "Benefactor," the lone character in the "Mixed" characterization, would have made to brief a chapter. The Discussion will begin with the category of "Negative" characterizations, which accounted for roughly 42 percent of all characterizations identified in the sample. Three characters were included in this category, the "Troublemaker," the "Criminal," and the "Crook."

4.3 The "Troublemaker" Character

The "Troublemaker" character dominated the negative portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples; if appeared more often than any other characterization at 23.80 percent of all articles in the sample. This characterization appeared more regularly in the StarPhoenix at 26.67 percent than in the Leader Post at 19.79 percent. However it does remain the most frequently used characterization in both newspapers (see Table 4.2.1). The front-page coverage of the "Troublemaker" character encompasses 21.4 percent of the entire sample, and is represented evenly in both newspapers (see Table 4.2.2).

Most frequently this character, who may otherwise be called an advocate, is portrayed as working toward Aboriginal causes that would result in problems for non-Aboriginal Peoples. The "Troublemaker" character is portrayed as demanding, and

unreasonable in his/her demands. Often the demands of the "Troublemaker" are political demands or demands for the "special" treatment of Aboriginal Peoples. This character is depicted demanding that the "special" needs of Aboriginal Peoples be attended to in public institutions, including the legal and educational systems. These "special" needs include efforts to make programs more culturally aware and/or appropriate. The "Troublemaker" views Aboriginal Peoples as having the inherent right to differential treatment. Additionally, the "Troublemaker" is frequently portrayed as someone who cannot overlook the problems of the past, so he/she seeks restitution or retribution for historical problems. This research has found that Aboriginal Peoples are portrayed as "Troublemakers" whose demands could be seen as threatening the way of life of other Canadians.

4.3.1 Case #1: Residential School Lawsuits

The first case in this study where Aboriginal Peoples were consistently portrayed as "Troublemakers" involves residential school lawsuits. Reports indicated that churches, including the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United and Presbyterian churches were being named as co-defendants with the federal government in residential school lawsuits. It was reported that church leaders suggested that the lawsuits could ultimately bankrupt some of the churches unless the government aided the churches somehow. The articles about the many lawsuits being filed by Aboriginal Peoples over residential school experiences explained that those lawsuits would not only bankrupt churches, but would also cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

A Leader Post article published on May 23, 2000 entitled "Lawsuits Bankrupt Church" demonstrates the way in which Aboriginal Peoples using lawsuits to seek

restitution for their residential school experiences are being labelled as "Troublemakers." The article begins with the following statement about the problems the Roman Catholic Church is having because of these lawsuits:

> The leader of Manitoba's Catholic Community says his order is on the brink of bankruptcy because of a crush of residential school lawsuits. Father Jean-Paul Isabelle ... said he blamed unethical lawyers and the province for not accepting greater responsibility for residential schools. Isabelle said his order has spent close to $1 million responding to more than 1,900 lawsuits filed against it on behalf of aboriginal complainants alleging abuse at residential schools. "A lot of people who have nothing bad to say about their time at residential schools are being solicited by lawyers who say that there could be money in it for them," he said (Leader Post, May 23, 2000:A6).

This article's reference to the Roman Catholic Church being on the "brink of bankruptcy" due to the "crush" of lawsuits implies that the church is in this position simply because of the "Troublemaker" character filing lawsuits. The article implies these lawsuits are frivolous attempts to get money by both the unethical lawyers who take on these clients and the clients themselves whom are motivated by greed. There were numerous articles about the plight of Canadian churches named as plaintiffs in residential school lawsuits.

Taken together, articles about Roman Catholic and Anglican churches facing bankruptcy as a result of residential school lawsuits suggest that churches will be closed due to these lawsuits. The plight of Canada's churches presented in the articles suggests that there is nothing sacred or immune from the litigation of Aboriginal Peoples. Clearly the message is that individuals pursuing residential school lawsuits are in it for the money and that they will not be deterred by the claims that some churches will be forced into bankruptcy by these lawsuits. Aboriginal Peoples' scepticism about the dire financial straits of the churches is demonstrated in a business article published in the

May 25, 2000 issue of the Leader Post entitled "Natives skeptical churches face bankruptcy:"

> Native people are skeptical about claims by Canadian churches that the churches could be forced into bankruptcy by a crush of residential school lawsuits. ...There was bitterness over recent claims by several church organizations, including the Anglican Church of Canada, which warn they could be driven to bankruptcy by thousands of lawsuits from aboriginals alleging abuse at the live-in schools. "They have lied to us so much, I don't believe them," said Isabelle Knock-wood, 69, a member of the Indian Brook First Nation in Nova Scotia ... "I don't believe they're bankrupt. The Vatican has so many buildings and museums filled with all kinds of goods that they got from native peoples all over the world. They have lots of things that can be turned into money. I don't think they're broke. I don't buy that." (Leader Post, May 25, 2000: B12).

This article again makes reference to the "crush" of lawsuits that could bankrupt the churches. Isabelle Knockwood's suggestion that the Vatican is filled with treasures that could be sold off to prevent church bankruptcy that she expects the international church community to finance these lawsuit settlements and was sure to be shocking to the reader. Additionally, Knockwood's example of liquidating goods from the Vatican, the holy city of the Roman Catholic Church, so that, the Anglican Church, can pay for lawsuit settlements serves to minimize the credibility of Knockwood; her credibility suffers since she suggests that one church liquidate to pay for the settlement of another church, and the comment shows her lack of empathy for the possible bankruptcy of the churches. The coverage of the residential school lawsuits clearly portrays Aboriginal Peoples as "Troublemakers" with little empathy for the plight of Canada's churches.

4.3.2 Case #2: AFN Leader Matthew Coon Come

The residential school lawsuits are not the only example of Aboriginal Peoples being portrayed as "Troublemakers" in the newspapers. The second case where

Aboriginal Peoples are portrayed as demanding and unreasonable is highlighted in the news coverage of Matthew Coon Come. Numerous articles about newly elected Assembly of First Nations (AFN) leader Matthew Coon Come, portrayed him as a "Troublemaker." Articles focused on his reported plans to be confrontational and to force Aboriginal issues to the forefront by any means necessary, including embarrassing the Canadian government in the international arena. It was suggested that Coon Come's election victory was closely linked to his confrontational approach, Coon Come ran on an election platform that argued that the incumbent AFN Chief, Phil Fontaine, was too close to the government, and that an AFN Chief should be more autonomous.

Coon Come's leadership style was described in the news article "Ottawa too slow for 'Native baby boom'" published in the July 10, 2000 issue of the StarPhoenix. The article quotes Coon Come saying, "[he] is determined to launch 'a relentless attack on the status quo, behaving like good little Indians never got us anywhere ...there is a social time bomb that is ticking'" (Mofina, July 10, 2000: A10). Another article entitled "Fontaine" published on the front page of the July 13, 2000 issue of the StarPhoenix calls Coon Come, "a tough talking Cree leader." The article quoted him saying, "The minute we say anything about our rights, they classify us as adversarial. They call us radical... I know when to negotiate and when to fight ... we need some good cops and bad cops. I'm willing to be a bad cop sometimes" (StarPhoenix, July 13, 2000: A1).

Clearly these articles indicate that Coon Come is not a passive leader. That he plans not to behave like a "good little Indian," declares that he is prepared to be the "bad cop sometimes," and his threat of the "social time bomb...ticking" indicate that he plans to be an active, and at times adversarial, leader. The way that Coon Come is quoted is important because certain statements frame the mandate of the AFN Chief in the mind of

the public, and serve to make the public concerned about the actions of this leader. Doubtlessly, Coon Come was aware that these quotations would be printed, and he was likely using the media portrayal of him to create an image of an individual who could not be ignored by government officials. In the end, this move serves to reinforce and reproduce ideas about the unreasonable and demanding nature of the "Troublemaker" character and Aboriginal Peoples in general.

Response to Coon Come's confrontational approach came in the form of columns, editorials and letters to the editor. The critique of Coon Come is typified in a StarPhoenix editorial published July 19, 2000 entitled "Coon Come will set pace." The editorial features the following remarks:

> Things just got a whole lot more interesting when it comes to Canada's relations with Aboriginal people after Matthew Coon Come's election as Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. At a time when some mainstream politicians are looking to capitalize on the public backlash against aboriginal rights ... Canada's Indian Chiefs have turned to Coon Come's no-hold-barred approach to further their case. ...In doing so, they turfed out Phil Fontaine after only a single term at the helm of the AFN, even though they elected him in 1997 mainly because he offered a more conciliatory and diplomatic alternative to former grand chief Ovide Mercredi in dealing with Ottawa. ...The leader of Quebec's Northern Cree [Coon Come] has earned a deserved reputation for being confrontational in pressing for aboriginal rights, but Canadians would be mistaken to dismiss Coon Come as a one-dimensional character or one whose "fire in the belly" will dissipate once he gets com fortable in his new position. He is a shrewd tactician when it comes to pressing Native issues, eschewing such unsophisticated actions as erecting blockades for more effective theatrics to gain international attention (StarPhoenix, July 19, 2000: A12).

This editorial makes frequent reference to Coon Come's "Troublemaker" tendencies, describing him as the antithesis of former chief Phil Fontaine, who was considered to be diplomatic in dealing with the federal government. The characterization of Matthew Coon Come as a shrewd tactician who will avoid blockades in exchange for theatrics in

the international arena demonstrates the perception of Coon Come as a "Troublemaker;" one more interested in diminishing Canada's international reputation than dealing with native issues in a quiet and diplomatic fashion. The above quotation suggests that Coon Come will become a thorn in the side of the Canadian government, and call attention to problems that will be expensive, to deal with and perhaps politically embarrass ing.

The newspapers consistently portray politically active Aboriginal Peoples as unreasonable and demanding, working towards the betterment of Aboriginal Peoples at the expense of other Canadians; in short, they are portrayed as people who create problems for other Canadians. These findings are consistent with those of Fleras and Elliott (1996), who found that Native people were portrayed "'as problem people' who 'have problems' or 'create problems.'"

4.4 The "Crook" Character

The negative portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples in the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix has not been limited to the litigation and political activism of the "Troublemaker" character. In mid-June, 2000 a new characterization of Aboriginal People appeared in the sample, the "Crook." This characterization portrayed Aboriginal Peoples as having corrupt business practices. Often this character was referred to as accountable to no one, and was accused of committing white-collar crime or not complying with government mandates. The "Crook" character appeared in the sample after the allegations of financial mismanagement by the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) CEO and Board Chairperson, Dutch Lerat. Coverage of the "Crook" characterization comprised 10.53 percent of all articles in the sample, with 10.98 percent in the StarPhoenix, and 9.98 percent in the Leader Post (see Table 4.2.1). Articles

featuring the "Crook" character dominated headlines, appeared on the front page 18 times, and comprised 32.14 percent of the 56 cover stories (see Table 4.2.2). Front-page coverage of the "Crook" character comprised 30.3 percent of StarPhoenix, and 34.8 percent of Leader Post articles.

The portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples as white-collar criminals has not regularly been found in other research as a common stereotype for Aboriginal Peoples. However, as Aboriginal Peoples become more successful with land claims and other litigation, a stereotypically poor and unemployed population is gaining access to wealth and white-collar employment; and these Aboriginal Peoples are increasingly portrayed as corrupt. The "Crook" characterization of Aboriginal Peoples portrays them involved in band governance, and implies SIGA, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) or related businesses are corrupt. After the "SIGA Scandal" broke there were numerous calls for SIGA and the FSIN to increase their accountability to both the public and the Aboriginal community.

4.4.1 Case #3 The SIGA Scandal – Unaccounted for spending of SIGA Executives

Coverage of the "SIGA Scandal" focused on the spending of SIGA CEO and Chairperson Dutch Lerat and the lack of an executive spending policy at SIGA. Reports about the SIGA scandal not only portrayed Dutch Lerat as the "Crook" character, but this incident reduced the credibility of other members of SIGA and the FSIN, especially FSIN Chief, Perry Bellegarde. The information that was printed about this case suggested corruption at the highest levels of management within the FSIN and SIGA. Reports of corruption overshadowed any of the generosity or good work of these two organizations, and the previously celebrated generosity of SIGA was considered suspect.

Initial reports based on a FSIN press conference suggested that the FSIN and SIGA had uncovered the problem with executive spending during an annual audit and were taking the necessary steps to deal with it. An article published in the StarPhoenix on June 16, 2000 titled, "Policy in place for executives doling out cash" outlined the spending of some SIGA executives. The article indicated that "Dutch Lerat spent $260,000 on gifts, contributions to powwows and other events, travel for himself and others and various other expenses, Bellegarde said. The expenses weren't inappropriate 'but he didn't have the paper trail that's necessary'"(Warick, June 16, 2000: A1).

On June 17, 2000, details regarding the SIGA case were released at a Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SLGA) press conference. The press conference prompted six articles about the situation at SIGA. The articles indicated that Lerat had $360,000 in unaccounted -for spending in one year, that SIGA had given Lerat a retroactive raise in the full amount of his unaccounted-for spending and that the SLGA suspended Lerat from his position at SIGA (Cowan, June 17, 2000). FSIN chief, Perry Bellegarde, was central to this debate from its earliest stages. He argued that the gaming authority had overstepped its jurisdiction with demands for Lerat to be fired and salary increases to be rescinded (Warick, June 17, 2000a: A1; Warick, June 17, 2000b: A1).

The battle involving SLGA, SIGA, FSIN and Lerat continued for a few days after the unaccounted for spending was made public. Both the SLGA and the FSIN refused to budge on the SLGA demand that Lerat be fired. The FSIN refused to fire Lerat, and claimed that SLGA had overstepped its authority and encroached on SIGA jurisdiction. Eventually, SIGA and the FSIN relented, firing Dutch Lerat; these circumstances were featured in a June 22, 2000 article published in the Leader Post entitled "Of gaming authority." In the article Bellegarde describes the government's

threats that SIGA fire Lerat or have their four casinos shut down as "oppressive and heavy-handed" (Parker, June 22, 2000: A1). The events at SIGA leading to Lerat's dismissal, resulted in many questions about SIGA's and the FSIN's accountability and business practice.

The most frequent suggestions of corruption the Aboriginal Leaders came from columns about the "SIGA Scandal." Mandryk (June 20, 2000: A11) column entitled suggested large-scale corruption in Aboriginal governance, and warned that the "SIGA Scandal" had irrevocably damaged the confidence of the white community in Aboriginal leadership:

> The FSIN's handling of Lerat's situation has been a complete disservice to its band members and one that shatters the confidence of the white community on all matters related to native self-government. It's all too typical of the games that are too often played at the highest level of Indian politics.

Further suggestions of corruption were discussed in a column entitled "Lerat debacle tarnishes FSIN accountability" published on June 22, 2000, in the StarPhoenix. This column suggested that there was a lack of accountability on behalf of Aboriginal Leaders, and it attributed this corruption to leadership autonomy:

> That plays directly to the fears of the wider community, including many Native people, who worry that more First Nations control over their own affairs will inevitably lead to more corruption. ... All of this corporate manoeuvring is done far above the heads of the "shareholders," that is, rank and file band members in the various First Nations. They have no freedom of information legislation to rely on, and no effective means of tracking spending even at a reserve level, much less in the lofty confines of casino administration (Burton, June 22, 2000: C12).

Phrases like, "It's all too typical of the games that are too often played at the highest level of Indian politics" (Mandryk, June 20, 2000: A11), and "more First Nations control over their own affairs will inevitably lead to more corruption" (Burton,

June 22, 2000: C12), serve to discredit Aboriginal Leadership. Taken together, these quotations suggest that this is the type of behaviour is to be expected from autonomous Aboriginal Leaders, and there is a need for Aboriginal Peoples to continue to be managed by an outside party.

In most cases, the reaction to the "SIGA Scandal" in editorials, columns and letters to the editor offered overt condemnation of SIGA and the FSIN including their boards of directors and of Indian Gaming in general. The scandal reporting painted most people with any connection to SIGA or the FSIN as the "Crook" character.

4.4.2 Case #4: Calls for Reform of Band Governance

Often articles indirectly referred to corruption and financial mismanagement by First Nations Chiefs and First Nations Councillors. Specific allegations of corruption and financial mismanagement at the band level of Aboriginal governance were made in a letter to the editor published in the May 18, 2000 issue of the StarPhoenix. The letter entitled, "Reform of band leadership vital" exemplifies some of the stereotypical ideas about financial mismanagement at the band governance level:

> Perry Bellegarde and Doug Cuthand are trading words about personal differences. They would better serve their people from their lofty positions (for they have made it) by reforming aboriginal governance with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and band governments, including chiefs, band councillors and band office administrators of all stripes. ... The people I mentioned must make payments on new vehicles and the multitude of other fringe benefits that a normal Canadian citizen could not afford. Corrupt individuals are counter-productive to our self-determination and contribute to unjust stereotyping. They perpetuate bad government by consistently allying themselves with poor and blackmailed politicians who will always look the other way as they use their position to embezzle in order to keep and enhance a standard of living that is scandalous. One sees them drive by in a new pickup, while their people hitchhike to town to sell recyclables to SARCAN (Noon, May 18, 2000: A15).

The publishing of this letter by the StarPhoenix allowed allegations of corruption and embezzlement at a band level to be discussed more overtly than in any article written by a reporter. This letter, having successfully negotiated the many filters that determine what is newsworthy, suggested that the media values the opinion voiced therein. The line, "corrupt individuals are counter-productive to our self-determination" suggests that it is an Aboriginal person who is levelling the critique, and thereby legitimated the suggestion of corruption and embezzlement.

Other remarks made in the letter were sure to get public attention and increase the public sentiment that corruption is rampant in Aboriginal governance. The letter alleged that Chiefs, band councillors and band office administrators, "use their position to embezzle in order to keep and enhance a standard of living that is scandalous" (Noon, May 18, 2000: A15). This "standard of living" was said to include "new vehicles and the multitude of other fringe benefits that a normal Canadian citizen could not afford" (Noon, May 18, 2000: A15). Additionally, this letter suggested that this band level corruption is the cause of poverty on reserves: "One sees them drive by in a new pickup, while their people hitchhike to town to sell recyclables to SARCAN."

The effect of this letter was that it reinforced the stereotype of corruption of Aboriginal Peoples, and undermined the credibility of band leaders whom have been labelled as equally corrupt in this letter. While the letter urged chan ges to help the "average poor Indian," the image of the "average poor Indian" hitchhiking to town to cash in his/her recycling at SARCAN is a familiar and stereotypical portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples. Many residents of Saskatchewan know the image of Aboriginal Peoples living in poverty; people who, when unable to support themselves, resort to

living on social assistance or on the deposit refunds they receive from pop bottles and beer cans.

4.5 The "Criminal" Character

The "Criminal" character was most frequently reported, not as an individual, but as someone who fills the province's jails. Details of the crimes the "Criminal" is accused of were generally given in reports about trials or sentencing. A few reports offered descriptions of the offender, and generally asked for the public to come forward with information leading to the arrest of that offender; these are Crime Stoppers reports. Wortley (2002) argued that the information found in Crime Stoppers reports is too vague to be useful and that this information serves mainly to communicate the "race" of the offender to the public, and to reinforce criminogenic stereotypes.

The "Criminal" character was not portrayed as frequently in the sample as the "Troublemaker" or the "Crook" characters, comprising only 7.55 percent of the entire sample. Articles containing the "Criminal" characterization accounted for 9.89 percent of Leader Post coverage, and 5.88 percent of StarPhoenix articles. This character also reflected only 1.8 percent of the front-page coverage in the entire sample and that coverage occurred only in the Leader Post, comprising 4.3 percent of articles.

4.5.1 Case #5 Aboriginal Prison Population

Articles about the "Criminal," though relatively few, make frequent reference to stereotypical ideas about Aboriginal Peoples. Reports about Aboriginal Peoples making up three quarters of all new inmates at provincial facilities suggested that Aboriginal Peoples commit a disproportionate amount of crime. On June 2, 2000 an article entitled

"Three-quarters of Sask. Inmates Native: report" was published in the StarPhoenix. The article began as follows:

> Each time someone entered a Saskatchewan jail last year, there was a three-in-four chance that person was aboriginal. First Nations claims they are over-represented behind bars were backed up Thursday by a study of adult correctional services released by the Canadian Centre of Justice Statistics. ... "As we incarcerate so many people, and so many are aboriginal, it's difficult to say that the system doesn't require some changes," provincial Justice Minister Chris Axworthy said. ... Saskatchewan had far and away the highest percentage of Aboriginal admissions, with Manitoba a distant second at 59 percent. It's an expensive statistic: the average daily cost of housing an inmate in jail is $123, or nearly $44,5000 a year (Star Pheonix, June 2, 2000: A4).

This article's assertion that "claims" of over-representation of Aboriginal Peoples in jail were "backed-up" by the report, suggested that the "claims" were not taken seriously earlier. Additionally, the reference to the cost of keeping these inmates being high implies Aboriginal inmates cost the public a $44,500 a year each. Finally, this article that makes reference to the "claims" of First Nations, silences the voices of Aboriginal Peoples by not offering the Aboriginal perspective. By listing no Aboriginal Peoples as references and not including any quotations from Aboriginal Peoples in this article, the reader understands who is considered a credible source, and by who is not.

This article elicited a response both in columns and letters to the editor. No letters to the editor represented the view that this study was accurate; rather, the letters suggested that Aboriginal Peoples were imprisoned at a high rate because they committed crime at a high rate. One such letter, entitled "Deal with the hard facts re prison population" was published in the June 8, 2000 issue of the StarPhoenix. This letter charged:

> You can tell what is "politically correct" by the tone of "Three quarters of Sask. Inmates Native (SP June 2). Aboriginals make up a large part of the jail population because they make up the largest percentage of those

> who break the laws. I wish that Justice Minister Chris Axworthy would be straight with the taxpaying public and say we have to get aboriginals to stop breaking the law so much. As a society, we have to accept that there are individuals who cannot be "fixed" by any system and choose to remain criminal. Unfortunately, the only way to control their behaviour and protect society is to lock them up. The figure quoted in the story of $123 a day to jail someone is questionable. When I sat on a provincial correctional centre budget review panel five years ago, the figure was a full third less than that. Even $123 would be a small price to pay ... The public is actually saving money by locking up criminals. Think about it. If someone can't do his 10-plus B and Es a day, he doesn't use up valuable police and emergency resources and he isn't causing property damage and collecting welfare. Moreover, he isn't causing law-abiding citizens to lose the privacy of their homes (Bender, June 8, 2000: A15).

Bender (2000) suggested that society take a harsh law-and-order approach when dealing with criminals, mainly Aboriginal Peoples. The author used his past position on a budget review panel to give himself expert status. Bender's suggestion that Justice Minister Axworthy should tell the public that "we have to get aboriginals to stop breaking the law so much" a clear dichotomy between "we" (the public) and "them" (Aboriginal Peoples) as criminals. Bender used many negative stereotypes of Aboriginal Peoples, for example that "they" drain society's resources by living on welfare and that they damage or steal the property of "law abiding citizens." Finally, Bender's reference to "individuals who cannot be fixed" and "choose to remain criminal" indicated a lack of knowledge about the complexity of Aboriginal over-incarceration.

Aboriginal over-incarceration is a well-known issue that has been the subject of a Public Inquiry in Manitoba. The Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba (RAJIM) states: "the justice system has failed Manitoba's Aboriginal Peoples on a massive scale. It has been insensitive and inaccessible, and has arrested and imprisoned Aboriginal Peoples in grossly disproportionate numbers" (Hamilton and Sinclair,

1991:1). In its research into over-incarceration of Aboriginal Peoples the RAJIM identified what it believes, to be the cause of this over-incarceration, "we believe that the causes of Aboriginal criminal behaviour are rooted in a long history of discrimination and social inequality that has impoverished Aboriginal people and consigned them to the margins of Manitobian society"(Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991:85).

4.5.2 Case #6: The Young, Dangerous Aboriginals

Articles appearing in the sample that portrayed individuals as the "Criminal" character were frequently either Crime Stoppers reports or reports about Aborig inal men under thirty who were sought by police, were on trial, or imprisoned. The "Criminal" characterization describes Aboriginal Peoples (usually young males) as angry, dangerous and violent gang members. This theme appeared not only in the characterization of the "Criminal" but also in articles that appeared to be praising the good work of the "Cultural Icon," the "Good Indian," and the "Athlete." The efforts or work of the "Positively" Characterized Aboriginal person was often described in contrast to these angry and dangerous youth.

A Community Crime Report article entitled "Smash and Grab B&E" published in the June 16, 2000 issue of the StarPhoenix describes the suspects of a break and enter in Saskatoon as, "Native males in their early 20's. One is tall and wearing a pullover jacket with stripes on the sleeves. His pants were dark coloured with cargo pockets. The other one is of a husky build and 5'10" (StarPhoenix, June 16, 2000: A4). Clearly, the descriptions of these two Aboriginal men are so vague that they could match almost any taller Aboriginal man. The description of the first suspect's clothing is particularly vague "a pullover jacket with stripes on the sleeves" and dark coloured "cargo" pants

adequately describes the everyday dress of countless youth in Saskatoon. The article did little more than reinforce the criminogenic stereotypes to which Wortley (2002) referred.

Other articles served to reinforce ideas about Aboriginal Peoples as dangerous and violent. Articles about "dangerous" Aboriginal youth feature accounts of the violent and shocking crimes of which these men are accused or have been convicted. One such article entitled "Warrant issued for Regina man" printed in the Leader Post on July 12, 2000, briefly outlined the crime and furnished a description of one "dangerous" young man that police were seeking:

> A shooting incident had led to a warrant for the arrest of a Regina man, wanted on an attempted murder charge. The Regina Police service obtained a warrant for the arrest of Alvin James Norton ... Norton, 27, is five feet seven inches, aboriginal, 166 pounds (Leader Post, July 12, 2000: A4).

Articles such as this often feature very generic descriptions of Aboriginal men, and reinforce public fear of young Aboriginal men with the violent accounts given. Other articles that focus on the Aboriginal "Criminal" who is imprisoned continue to reinforce stereotypes of dangerousness and gang activity. A StarPhoenix article, entitled "Gang violence suspected in P.A. prison assaults" published July 29, 2000, details some information about Aboriginal gangs:

> A gang payback is suspected as the reason behind violence at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary on Thursday. ... Warden Brenda Lepage ... said the inmates involved in the violence are known aboriginal youth gang members. At this point, officials at Saskatchewan Penitentiary have identified between 60 and 70 known gang members within the institution (July 29, 2000).

A final example of an article that serves to reinforce and reproduce stereotypes of Aboriginal dangerousness, violence, and gang activity is epitomised by a Leader Post

published an article entitled, "Crown may seek dangerous offender status for Moise" on June 14, 2000:

> Having convinced a judge that Mitchell William Moise shot Tim Cyr in the leg, the Crown prosecutor may now ask her to designate the 21-year-old as a dangerous offender. If that happens, Moise's long and violent criminal record will be interrupted by years or even decades (O'Brien, June 14, 2000: A5).

This article featured many remarks that served to provoke public fear young Aboriginal men like Moise. In a few words, this article conveyed enough information to tell the public that Moise, at 21 years of age, had shot someone and that this was just another conviction in a "long and violent criminal record." This article went on to describe the crime as a "drive-by shooting" based on a grudge between the two men, and that the victim of this crime had himself been on trial in 1998 for "attempted murder." The article ended with a recap of Moise's crimes, "Eleven of Moise's 39 adult and youth offences are violent ... when Moise was 17, he was sentenced in a string of assaults that culminated in him wounding his uncle with a bullet to the face" (O'Brien, June 14, 2000: A5).

The references to a "long and violent" criminal record, a "drive-by" shooting, and the shooting of his own uncle clearly portrayed Moise as an Aboriginal youth who is out of control, and dangerous to everyone he encounters. Articles like this one further reinforce commonly held stereotypes of Aboriginal dangerousness and violence. The appearance of the above-mentioned article and letter, in combination with similar items in the sample serve to reinforce and reproduce a negative understanding of Aboriginal Peoples. Other articles in the sample refer to the criminal activities of Aboriginal Peoples, including the alleged gang activity of Aboriginal youths and adults both within and outside the prison system, and the violent crimes of which Aboriginal people stand

accused. In short, the articles referring to criminal behaviour draw heavily on stereotypically negative notions of Aboriginal Peoples which feed the public perception that Aboriginal Peoples are dangerous, violent, criminal, and that drain they society's resources either while on welfare or in prison.

4.6 Conclusion: The Negative Portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples

This analysis of newspaper articles from the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix shows that Aboriginal Peoples are often portrayed "Negatively," and that these newspapers sensationalize negative images of Aboriginal Peoples. This study indicates that Aboriginal Peoples are portrayed "Negatively" in roughly 42 percent of articles that feature explicit reference to one of the nine Aboriginal keywords. The most frequently used of these negative characterizations is the "Troublemaker". The "Troublemaker" character is essentially an advocate for the rights of Aboriginal Peoples, but his/her work is portrayed as being at the expense of other Canadians.

The next most frequently used negative characterization of Aboriginal Peoples is the "Crook". This character represents a relatively new stereotype of Aboriginal Peoples as corrupt in their business practises. Articles suggest that as the level of Aboriginal autonomy grows this problem will become more widespread. This characterization of corruption seems to provide opportunity to argue that Aboriginal Peoples be granted further autonomy, and that the "Manager" maintain his/her role. The interests of the state and capital are served by maintaining the "Manager" role, a role often filled by middle and upper class white people. Greater Aboriginal autonomy would likely lead to more Aboriginal "Managers" thus displacing the white middle and upper class managers.

Finally, the "Criminal" character refers to those Aboriginal Peoples accused or convicted of committing a white-collar crime. These characterizations play on familiar stereotypes of Aboriginal Peoples as dangerous, and criminal. This character also elicits a response from the public which passionately refuses any acceptance of structural bias against Aboriginal Peoples in the justice system. The repeated portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples as the "Troublemaker," the "Crook" and the "Criminal" reinforces the image that they are problematic, and are creating issues with which society must deal.

5. Stereotypical Portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in Saskatchewan Newspapers

5.1 Introduction

Research into the media portrayal of ethnic and racial minorities has found that reporting on these groups is consistently stereotypical (Henry et al., 2000; Fleras and Elliott, 1996; Khaki and Prasad, 1988; van Dijk, 1988; Scanlion, 1977). The findings of this research indicate that, of the articles featuring explicit reference to at least one of the nine Aboriginal keywords, stereotypical portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in The Leader Post and The StarPhoenix comprise roughly 28 percent of the articles from each newspaper and 28.15 percent of the 437 articles in the entire sample (see Table 4.2.1). There are three types of characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples that have been included in the stereotypical characterization category: the "Typical Indian," the "Victim," and the "Manager." The stereotypical characterization of Aboriginal Peoples received 26.8 percent of the front-page news coverage in the sample, and the "Manager" character dominated almost half of that front-page news coverage (see Table 4.2.2).

Two of the characters in the stereotypical category, the "Typical Indian" and the "Victim," are characters that have problems often associated with the Aboriginal population including suicide, addiction, disease, violence and victimization. The third character in this category is the "Manager," a characterization of those whose job it is to manage the aboriginal population at a provincial or federal level of governance. The

"Manager" characterization has been included in the stereotypical category because many of the articles in the category suggest that Aboriginal Peoples do need to be managed and most often a non-Aboriginal person does that managing.

5.2 The "Typical Indian"

The "Typical Indian" characterization is used when the individual portrayed is shown as irresponsible or as an individual who makes matters more difficult. Often this character's problems are presented in a way that suggest that the problems are his/her own fault based on his/her own poor choices, often implying that these are truly individual problems as opposed to systemic problems linked to historical and political issues. The "Typical Indian" is characterized as a drain on public resources and as not contributing to the economy or society. Often this characterization is used with people who have problems with addiction or abuse of drugs and/or alcohol.

Characterizations of the "Typical Indian" comprised 12.81 percent of the entire sample, with the StarPhoenix and the Leader Post featuring articles with this type of characterization 14.51 and 10.44 percent respectively. This character was infrequently the focus of front-page news, with only 3 cases in the entire sample appearing on page A1. In the cases where these articles did appear on the front page it was because the claims of the "Typical Indian" had gained national attention.

5.2.1 Case #1: Alcoholism

The first example, which demonstrates Aboriginal Peoples portrayal as the "Typical Indian" character focuses on news articles that highlight problems of alcoholism in an Inuit community. On July 14, 2000 a news article entitled "Liquor

Store Reduces Daily Beer Limit to 12 Per Person" was published in the StarPhoenix. The article opens with a report of the sixth suicide in six month time period:

> The number of suicides continues to climb in [Nain, Nfld.] Labrador's largest Inuit community, a remote town racked by widespread alcoholism. In the past six months, six people have committed suicide in the coastal community of 1,300. Alcohol was a factor in almost every case, RCMP say. On Thursday, police reported a 34-year-old resident of Nain had killed himself the day before... Sources in the community say that the man hanged himself after his common-law wife failed to return home after a night of binge drinking" (StarPhoenix, July 14, 2000: A10).

The sensational title suggests that the community is comprised of heavy drinkers. The context for this title appeared at the end of the article that was primarily about suicides, with the title referring to comments made by the liquor store owner. The liquor store owner said he was, "feeling the heat from protestors" pushing for a ban on alcohol sales, and he reportedly planned to reduce the daily purchase limit to 12 beers from 24 beers per person.

There is little doubt that the Inuit community of Nain, Newfoundland was facing some serious problems at the time that this article appeared in the newspaper. However, this article's reference to the "common-law wife [who] failed to return home after a drinking binge" suggests several things to the reader: first, that this couple didn't have a real marriage, and that the woman in question was so irresponsible that she caused her husband's suicide.

Alcoholism and high rates of suicide are problems frequently attributed to Aboriginal Peoples and frequently thought of as individual problems. Articles such as this one do not delve into the reasons that communities like Nain, Newfoundland have such high rates of self-abuse and suicide. This article serves to reinforce commonly held negative stereotypes about Aboriginal Peoples as irresponsible, alcoholic and suicidal.

5.2.2 Case #2: High Risk Activity

Another case of Aboriginal Peoples characterized as the "Typical Indian" in the newspapers suggests that Aboriginal Peoples regularly participate in high-risk behaviours that result in preventable illnesses. A news article entitled "Aboriginals hit hard by HIV" published in the Leader Post on June 9, 2000 opened with the following remarks:

> The latest research on incidents of HIV/AIDS in Canada shows that nearly half the newly diagnosed HIV cases in Saskatchewan are among the aboriginal population... The proportion of Canadian AIDS cases among aboriginal peoples is on the rise and aboriginal lenders are warning the infection level within the aboriginal population is reaching pandemic proportion (Kyle, June 9, 2000: A5).

Aside from merely reporting on the findings of Health Canada this article serves to solidify the interpretation of Aboriginal Peoples as irresponsible, not protecting themselves from the foreseeable outcome of practicing high risk behaviours. The suggestion that infection is widespread throughout the Aboriginal population implies that any Aboriginal person could have the HIV/AIDS. This suggestion may further distance the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and non-aboriginal Canadians.

Numerous articles highlighted the large proportion of Aboriginal Peoples involved in the sex trade. Two nearly identical, lengthy feature articles about young prostitutes, of whom 85 percent were Aboriginal, were published in the June 24, 2000 issues of the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix; the Leader Post article was titled "Putting a stop to the child sex trade" and the StarPhoenix article "Politics and race standing in the way of useful action." The two titles are clearly quite different; however, reading the associated opening lines of the articles brings the reader to the understanding of the "Typical

Indian" who in this case engages in high risk activity while prostituting himself/herself on the city streets.

Aside from highlighting the issue of Aboriginal prostitution, these articles discuss at length the FSIN's reluctance to take part in a hearing designed to deal with the issue:

> The stakes are high and the outcome is far from clear. Race and politics are already complicating the process. It's estimated that 85 per cent of the individuals selling their bodies in Saskatoon and Regina are aboriginal (witnesses at the hearings say that there are more than 500 under the age of 19) and the province's largest native organization says it wants nothing to do with the hearings (Leader Post: D1; StarPhoenix: E1).

The articles repeatedly suggested that the FSIN would not participate in the hearings or assist the committee because they were not included in the project from the beginning (Leader Post: D1; StarPhoenix: E1). This article highlighted both the prevalence of Aboriginal youth in the sex trade and suggested the difficulties that can be encountered when a government project seeks to work co-operatively with an Aboriginal-run organization.

Further characterizations of the "Typical Indian" serve to reinforce negative stereotypical understandings of Aboriginal Peoples in terms of low levels of education, addiction, poverty, and welfare dependence. Often articles including negative stereotypical understandings of Aboriginal Peoples were skilfully written so that the articles need not overtly refer to Aboriginal Peoples as being on welfare or having addictions to drugs or alcohol. Rather, these articles talked about welfare dependence or addictions to drugs or alcohol and then suggested that these problems disproportionally affect Aboriginal Peoples. This message continues to reinforce negative stereotypes of Aboriginal Peoples as alcoholics or as living on welfare, without doing so it in a manner that would draw harsh criticism.

5.3 The "Victim"

The next character included in the stereotypical portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples is the "Victim." The "Victim" was a minor character not frequently mentioned in the sample. Characterizations of the "Victim" accounted for approximately 5 percent of the 437 articles in the sample, and in the Leader Post and the StarPhoenix (see Table 4.2.1). When the "Victim" was included they were often seen as helpless or frail; no one ever argued the victimization of these people. However rare, the "Victim" characterization came to the forefront when events were presented as *appalling*. Articles featuring the "Victim" characterization comprised 8.9 percent of the sample with a greater proportion of front-page articles from the StarPhoenix than the Leader Post - 12.1 and 4.3 percent respectively.

5.3.1 Case #3 Attack on Aboriginal Slow-pitch Players

An article about crime printed in the June 20, 2000 issue of the Leader Post highlighted the plight of the "Victim." The story, entitled "Attacked, Beaten with Baseball Bats," emphasized the *savage* events of the prior evening when Marcella Pete, her husband, and their friend were attacked by intruders with baseball bats. The article, while sympathetic to Pete's conveys a great deal of negative information. The article about the victimization of Pete, begins as follows:

> Marcella Pete's voice cracks when describing how she hid in a locked bedroom and listened to the sound of her husband and his friend getting savagely beaten with aluminium baseball bats early Sunday morning. Pete, 27, sustained head injuries in the attack and is now out of the hospital. Her husband, Clint Checkosis, is in Royal University Hospital along with Merl Jack, a friend also injured in the brutal assault (Zakreski, June 20, 2000: A7).

Pete's story continues to indicate that both the victims and their attackers were baseball players affiliated with the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority League who met at a ball tournament the previous day. This article uncharacteristically relies almost exclusively on quotations from one of the victims, Marcella Pete. However, the quotations that were selected for publication were very colourful, very sensationalistic. The following is an excerpt:

> We were sitting at the table, me and my husband and Merl, and Merl got up and said "I guess I should go home," cause he just lived on 22nd. Then all of a sudden smash, smash, smash, the door's getting busted open, and we looked at the back door and was people coming in and they had bats ... They were yelling stuff at us like "You guys wanna f--- around, you're gonna get it."...I was in the bedroom and I could hear them hitting them and saying "Kill'em, Kill'em (Zakreski, June 20, 2000: A7).

Selecting specific quotations from Pete allow the newspaper to report aspects of the incident that would otherwise be considered as inappropriate for the article. For example quoting Pete as saying "he just lived on 22nd," tells the reader that she and her husband were attacked on the west side of Saskatoon. The side of the city commonly thought of as the wrong side of the river. That Pete is quoted saying "you guys wanna f--- around" leaves the impression that the victims may have done something to instigate the attack. Finally, the "Kill'em, Kill'em" suggests the brutal nature of the attackers who were later described as being affiliated with the SIGA baseball league who met the victims at the Whitecap Reserve, which is a subtle but effective way of communicating the "race" of the assailants.

5.3.2 Case #4 Courthouse Confrontation at Trial of Munson and Hatchen

The "Victim" is also used when social and political correctness is foregone and someone publicly states something, which would have been better, kept private.

Numerous articles in early May 2000 concerned a candlelight vigil that turned into a yelling match outside the provincial courthouse in Saskatoon during the trial of police constables Dan Hatchen and Ken Munson. These two Saskatoon Police Officers were on trial facing charges of assault and forcible confinement for their alleged treatment of a young Aboriginal man, Darrell Night. Night accused the officers of driving him to the outskirts of Saskatoon and forcing him out of the police car on a cold January night. Within days of Darrell Night's allegation against the Officers, the bodies of two other Aboriginal men where found in the same area were Night said he was forced out of the car; after Night's complaint numerous other Aboriginal people made similar complaints.

An article entitled "Yelling match as police appear in court" published in the May 5, 2000 (A1) issue of the Leader Post highlighted the events occurring outside the courthouse that day:

> A quiet candlelight vigil turned ugly outside the provincial courthouse Wednesday when a yelling match erupted between an aboriginal grandmother and a woman who says she is a friend of Saskatoon police officers Dan Hatchen and Ken Munson. "How much beer do you drink and how much bingo do you play?" Cheryl Soucy screamed at Marji Pratt-Turo, who helped organize the vigil (Coolican, May 5, 2000: A1).

The article presents Marji Pratt-Turo as an Aboriginal grandmother who had helped to organize a quiet candlelight vigil, being verbally attacked by a supporter of the police officer, Cheryl Soucy. This event received wide spread media coverage and Soucy's actions were repeatedly condemned. van Dijk (1993) charges that the liberal press uses incidents like this to demonstrate how minorities are fairly treated in the press. By condemning Soucy's overtly racist, verbal victimization of an Aboriginal grandmother the press is able to point to this incident and defend their record of reporting on issues of importance to minorities.

A letter entitled "Poor way to help friend" published in the May 6, 2000 issue of the StarPhoenix outlines the outrage that this public airing of racist statements caused:

> Watching the heated confrontation that occurred between an elderly Native woman and a friend of one of the police officers, I sat at home, after a long day's work, shocked that someone would be so open about her painful and ignorant views. This so-called "lady" made incredibly derogatory comments: "How much welfare have you all been on?" "Why don't any Natives have jobs?" and "We go and get educated and you Natives don't." ... This "lady" is a supporter of one of the police officers in question. However, instead of improving the officers' status when she mouthed off, I am afraid that she did the opposite. People make friends with others who have similar interests, values and perceptions. When this "lady" makes" her evil views public, it reflects on the police officers. Her plan of sticking up for her "friend" has backfired (Baptiste, May 6, 2000: A16).

The victims, in this case were Aboriginal Peoples as a group, and specifically the elderly Native woman who was participating in a candlelight vigil. It was widely agreed that the derogatory remarks made by police officer supporter, Cheryl Soucy, were unacceptable things to say in a public setting. Numerous other articles suggested that many people likely quietly agreed with Soucy.

5.4 The "Manager"

The "Manager" characterization is used for an individual who is involved with some level of government: federal, provincial, municipal or tribal. It is this person's job to manage Aboriginal Peoples and important issues relevant to them. Articles primarily focused on issues of health, employment, gaming and the agendas of politicians. The "Manager" has the potential to be either an Aboriginal person or a non-Aboriginal person, though most frequently this characterization refers to non-Aboriginal politicians. Many articles that discuss the "Manager" character only do so in passing and therefore don't give extensive information about the "Manager" or Aboriginal Peoples in general.

Articles featuring the "Manager" characterization comprise 9.84 percent of the entire sample with a slightly greater frequency of articles about the "Manager" in Leader Post than in the StarPhoenix - 13.19 percent compared to 7.45 percent respectively. This characterization comprised 12.5 percent of the front-page coverage in the sample with 12.1 percent and 13.0 percent in the StarPhoenix and the Leader Post respectively. Often articles featuring the "Manager" characterization leaves the impression that Aboriginal Peoples *need* to be managed.

5.4.1 Case #5: Youth Employment Strategy

Articles that feature the "Manager's" attempts to create employment or health strategies dealing with Aboriginal Peoples are typified in a May 9, 2000 article published in the Leader Post entitled "RREDA Unveils its Wish List." In this article, the Regina Regional Economic Development Authority (RREDA) presented its budget to Regina city council and mentioned that RREDA was working on several projects, including "employment for Aboriginal youth" (Scott, May 9, 2000: B8). This article stresses the importance of government funding for projects that help Aboriginal Peoples find gainful employment. Often these articles focus on the cost to the *public* through government provision of these types of services.

5.4.2 Case #6: First Nations' Spending to be Made Public

A clearly defined case of the "Manager," both with political manoeuvring and demonstrating the need for the *management* of Aboriginal Peoples, is illustrated in a Leader Post article published July 5, 2000 entitled "Spending to be Made Public." In this article, the Minister of Indian Affairs, Robert Nault, announced that data on federal

funding transferred to First Nations would become available to the public, despite a Federal Court ruling that prevented the release of such information:

> Taxpayers will soon know more about how First Nations spend $4.6 billion a year in federal funds as Indian Affairs responds to calls for more accountability. Large parts of aboriginal audits are now shielded from public scrutiny by a 1988 Federal Court ruling will be released in coming months, said Cal Hegge, director of transfer payments for Indian Affairs. "We get questions from the public as to why there isn't more visibility of funds transferred to First Nations," he said in an interview. "The minister wants to increase transparency." Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault has told the department to devise a way of itemizing how Canada's 609 First Nations spend the cash without compromising the 1988 court ruling. ... Canadian Alliance MP John Williams...called the information void "a tremendous disservice to the taxpayer (who's) entitled to know where his money is going." "We know by rumour, innuendo and so on that (First Nations) audits contain some alarming information," said Williams... Mismanagement on reserves is "endemic" and Indian Affairs is scrambling to control how the potentially damaging information is released, Williams said. "If they put all the dirty linen on the line at once, the problems at (Human Resources Development Canada) would be like a tiny little storm in a teacup compared to Indian Affairs. ... It's that bad." (Leader Post, July 5, 2000: C6).

References in this article to "endemic mismanagement," "disservice to taxpayers," an audit with "some alarming information," and threats about the magnitude of the problem, demonstrate how the issue of First Nations funding was used to justify the need for the "Manager" character. This case serves both as a platform for political posturing and to reinforce the ideas that First Nations bands are irresponsible, corrupt, and that band members are not members of the taxpaying public.

5.5 Conclusion

Stereotypical portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in the StarPhoenix and the Leader Post serve to reinforce and reproduce negative stereotypical perceptions of Aboriginal Peoples. Each of the three character types discussed, the "Typical Indian," the "Victim" and the "Manager," serve to reinforce ideas about Aboriginal Peoples as irresponsible,

unemployed, and unhealthy, among other things. The three characterizations focus on different aspects of Aboriginal life, in terms of illness or addiction, victimization and third party management. However, the articles in the stereotypical characterization category each imply the same overriding message about Aboriginal Peoples. These messages reinforce and reproduce commonly held stereotypes of a problem-laden population requiring the Canadian state to attend to their needs.

Each of the six cases presented in the various characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples in the StarPhoenix and the Leader Post were presented as a representative example of the portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples in other articles of that category. The cases presented to demonstrate the "Typical Indian" characterization focused on problems of abuse and addiction in Aboriginal communities, and levels of Aboriginal participation in high-risk activity. These cases demonstrate reluctance on behalf of the Aboriginal community member to have solutions to these issues imposed on them, without adequate consultation and understanding.

The cases presented to demonstrate the "Victim" were quite different. One case was of a physical victimization and the other of a verbal victimization. While the cases themselves varied greatly in terms of the type of victimization and the type of victimizer, similarities remain. In both cases, the victimization was reported in terms of the victimization of individuals by individuals. This type of victimization was represented as being atypical.

The final cases presented to illustrate the "Manager" characterization demonstrate how often these articles serve to justify the position of the "Manager" character. It is frequently demonstrated that Aboriginal Peoples need to be managed. These articles like those of the "Typical Indian" reinforce ideas about Aboriginal Peoples as

irresponsible and problem-laden.

6. Positive and Mixed Portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in the Media

6.1 Introduction

Numerous articles were coded as *Positive* portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples. This category is comprised of three character types: the "Cultural Icon," the "Good Indian," and the "Athlete." The "Cultural Icon" characterizes those Aboriginal individuals know detailed information about their culture, and who are willing to share that knowledge with interested parties. This category also includes crafters, artisans, actors, and producers of written and computer material relating to Aboriginal Peoples. The "Good Indian" characterization applies to individuals who are reported as being either supportive of, or as pursuing, dominant group ideals. These individuals are portrayed as educated and hard working, and as resentful of the implication that they are *not* educated and hard working. Finally, the "Athlete" is promoted as a role model for others, someone who is using sport to overcome the problems of the "Typical Indian." Combined, these three positively portrayals account for 24.71 percent of the 437 articles in the sample. The Leader Post (28.57 percent) featured a slightly higher proportion of articles featuring Positive portrayals than the StarPhoenix (21.96 percent) (see Table 4.2.1). Positive portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in these newspapers represented 12.5 percent of the 56 front-page news stories with similar coverage in the Leader Post (13.0 percent) and the StarPhoenix (12.1 percent) (see Table 4.2.2).

When the Positive portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples appeared in the sample, this character was frequently portrayed as the antithesis of the stereotypically or negatively portrayed Aboriginal Peoples. Often this characterization was used to demonstrate that Aboriginal people who had overcome adversity on a personal level could succeed in society. In effect, this communicates to the reader that the problems and/or issues typically associated with Aboriginal Peoples are not based on structural or systematic barriers to success, but rather that they are based on personal deficiencies.

This chapter will also examine the lone *mixed* portrayal in the characterization of the "Benefactor." The case of the "Benefactor" is complicated because there is a significant change in the portrayal of this character approximately half way through the sample. The "Benefactor" character primarily refers to organizations rather than individuals. This character was initially praised for being generous, but is only mentioned in passing. After the spending practices of SIGA were questioned, the coverage of the "Benefactor," of which SIGA was the most generous example, shifted to include more lengthy reports about the nature of the "Benefactor's" donations. The "Benefactor's" motivations for giving donations were questioned, and associations with the "Benefactor" attracted suspicion. The change in perception of the "Benefactor" was so significant that organisations were offering to return funds given to them by the "Benefactor," and the volume and amounts of donations given by the "Benefactor" were questioned.

6.2 "Cultural Icon"

The "Cultural Icon" character typically is reported to know about his/her culture and history and reportedly tries to share his/her knowledge with any interested party.

Knowledge of Aboriginal cultures may come in many forms, which may include knowledge of traditional dancing, lifestyle, religious practice, storytelling, artwork or food. These characters do not *cause problems,* and are held in contrast with other Aboriginal Peoples. Often familiar stereotypes emerge in these stories, which stand in contrast to the good work of the "Cultural Icon." Coverage of the "Cultural Icon" comprised 9.61 percent of the entire sample with a greater proportion of articles about this character appearing in the Leader Post (14.29 percent) than in the StarPhoenix (6.27 percent) (see Table 4.2.1). Front-page coverage of the "Cultural Icon" accounted for 5.4 percent front-page coverage in the sample. The coverage from the Leader Post comprised 13.0 percent of front-page coverage that featured reference to Aboriginal Peoples (see Table 4.2.2).

6.2.1 Case #1: Youth Taught Metis Culture in North Battleford

The "Cultural Icon" is featured in an article entitled "Youth learn Metis culture" published May 9, 2000 in the StarPhoenix. This column highlights the work of a North Battleford, Saskatchewan man, Lyle Lee, who was teaching Aboriginal youth about traditional Aboriginal culture and survival skills. In the article, Lee reflects on his first experiences in dominant society, and his work with Aboriginal youth:

> "When I came into town from the trap-line for the first time they called me a dirty, thieving half-breed. But I just laughed at them. I didn't believe them because I knew who I was and what my roots were. I could survive in the bush and they couldn't, and I was proud of that." Lyle Lee is trying to cultivate the self-respect that comes from knowing your roots in a new crop of Metis young people growing up in North Battleford. Lee... is a cultural instructor at a highly successful youth centre operated by the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan (MNS) with federal government funding. His program has already trained 70 youth in traditional Metis environmental awareness and culture. ... Lee believes in teaching these kids through a hands-on approach. "You can't reach these kids through

> lectures and writing on the blackboard. I show them how to make pancakes from cattail roots and coffee from dandelions, and then we all sit down and eat together. That holds their attention."... Training in traditional culture promotes an environmental awareness that puts urban kids back in touch with nature. The program demonstrates in a concrete way that their grandparents were highly intelligent people who lived a *culture* appropriate for this environment. "Right now the young people spend too much time in front of the TV. Most of the kids are trying to emulate New York ghetto youth. Our own culture is not cool to them. They want to be tough, but I show them that the real warriors are the ones who do something for their community." The cultural program is an antidote to negative social influences. Lee says society is making children very angry and resentful (Hanley, May 9, 2000:C2).

This article about the work of Lyle Lee clearly demonstrates how Lee himself is self-confident and is connected to his culture. However, the descriptions of the youth with whom he works serve to make the public fearful of Aboriginal youth. These descriptions of Aboriginal youth serve to reinforce stereotypical understandings of Aboriginal Peoples as violent and angry. The article clearly distinguishes Lee from the *troubled* youth with whom he works, when it features quotations by Lee which describe the youths as wanting to "emulate New York ghetto youth," "want[ing] to be tough," and as "very angry and resentful."

The implication that this program is the "antidote" to the sickness that youth have, speaks volumes about the success of the program but also suggests that without this cultural training, these youth are dangerous. The article made reference to 250 youth on the waiting list for this program. The article also refers to similar, though less successful, programs in other communities. Such references may prompt the public to wonder: who will protect the public from these youth before they get the antidote? Who will protect the public from the youth that these programs cannot accommodate? The statements claiming the success of Lee's program serve to reinforce the idea that Aboriginal Peoples are dangerous. Dangerousness is implied first by the descriptions of

the "angry and resentful" youth. The success of this lone program, which is already overtaxed by a long waiting list, suggests that it does not have the capacity to deal with the magnitude of the problem of dangerousness. Finally, this article acknowledges that although the program is run by the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, it is funded by the Federal government. This serves to reinforce the idea that programs such as Lee's, that help Aboriginal Peoples, are funded by the public.

The characterization of Lee as the "Cultural Icon" demonstrates the positive impact that this character could have on others. It is because of this ability to positively influence others that the "Cultural Icon" is celebrated in the media. However, this character is presented in contrast to other Aboriginal Peoples, or is presented as atypical. Therefore, even in cases where Aboriginal success is being celebrated, negative and stereotypical understandings of Aboriginal Peoples are being reinforced.

6.2.2 Case # 2: National Aboriginal Day

The "Cultural Icon" characterization is also used to describe occasions that celebrate Aboriginal culture. On June 21, 2000 National Aboriginal Day was celebrated, hailed as a day to "recognize and celebrate the cultures and contributions of the aboriginal peoples of Canada – the Inuit, the Metis and the First Nations" (Leader Post, June 21, 2000:A8). The celebration in Saskatoon featured "powwow dancers, hoop dancers, drummers, singers, elders storytellers and musicians" (Robinson, June 21, 2000: A3). Visitors were treated to a free "traditional soup and bannock lunch" (Robinson, June 21, 2000: A3). It was a day for Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginal people alike to share in, and learn about, Aboriginal culture.

Participants in the celebrations were described as being moved by the unity that they observed at the celebrations. A Leader Post article published on June 22, 2000 entitled "National Aboriginal Day promotes unity" describes the festivities:

> When Kelly Malloy stood in a sunny Wascana Park on Wednesday and watched a First Nations man join hands with an elderly white woman in a round dance, the spirit of National Aboriginal Day was alive for him. ... "When it comes to fun ...it's a universal language," he said, "It's just a lot of cross-cultural understanding," added Malloy, who is himself and aboriginal. ... One woman said the day was so important to First Nations people, she let her six-year old son take in the festivities instead of attending school. ... She said the day is especially significant to First Nations children, like her son. "It makes him curious about who we are. ... We're not that lost culture" (Pacholik, June 22, 2000: A3).

Articles that reported on the National Aboriginal Day celebrations reported primarily on the types of food and entertainment that were offered to participants. Quotations appearing in the articles that were used to highlight the success of the celebrations consistently and identified the race of the person quoted, a rare instance where newspaper articles make overt reference to someone's race when quoting them. These articles suggest that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples can unite in the celebration of Aboriginal culture, dance and food.

These articles did not devote significant space to discussions of racism but did mention that racism must be eliminated. Most articles covering the celebrations of National Aboriginal day also featured passing reference to political statements made at the celebrations. A StarPhoenix article discussed an "aboriginal representative with the Canadian Federation of Students, [who] used the occasion to renew calls for a public inquiry into the standoff at Gustafson Lake, B.C." (Edmonds, June 22, 2000: C8). This *politicising* of the celebration appears to have been a disappointment to the writer who implies this move is political grandstanding because the student is described to have

"used the occasion." The writer's inclusion of political messages that were aired at these events reminds the reader of the political activism of the "Troublemaker" character, suggesting this may be one lone day of unity before the push for the recognition of the "special" right of Aboriginal Peoples begins again.

6.3 "The Good Indian"

The Good Indian characterization, although not mentioned infrequently, is often portrayed as atypical. Coverage of the "Good Indian" character comprises approximately 12 percent of the entire sample, and is represented equally in each newspaper (see Table 4.2.1). This character accounts for 7.1 percent of front-page coverage in the entire sample, all of which appeared in the StarPhoenix (12.1 percent) (see Table 4.2.2). This characterization is used for Aboriginal Peoples who are reported to be educated, responsible, healthy, and/or employed. This character stands out because, according to the dominant in society, he/she has achieved at least moderate success despite his/her racial background. The success of this character implies that the barriers facing Aboriginal Peoples are barriers based on personal deficiencies rather than structural constraints or inequities.

6.3.1 Case #2: My Neighbours Go To Work and School

A typical example of an article featuring the "Good Indian" character was printed in the May 12, 2000 issue of the StarPhoenix. In this column entitled "Time whites, Natives learn from past mistakes." Columnist Doug Cuthand responds to the racially - charged incident that occurred outside the provincial courthouse at the trial of Constables Munson and Hatchen. The incident refers to events occurring May 3, 2000

in Saskatoon where two women, one a supporter of the police officers on trial, and the other a member of a protest group holding a candlelight vigil at the courthouse, had a heated exchange in which the supporter of the police officers used racial slurs:

> Last week, I was in Toronto on business and enjoying the city's ambience. I returned to my hotel room to watch the news on TV and was greeted by the now famous scene outside the Saskatoon courthouse. My reaction was not one of anger or surprise; instead, a deep sense of sadness washed over me. I had just spent a stress-free day in a multicultural oasis and now I was confronted with the reality of life back home in a province that is quickly turning into the Mississippi North. The incident erupted in full view of the media who were on hand for the court appearance of Saskatoon police constables Dan Hatchen and Ken Munson. A crowd of protestors was holding a vigil and a confrontation broke out between the protestors and supporters of the police officers. To the woman's credit, she later came forward and apologized. I respect that. On the other hand, I wonder how many people out there secretly applauded her. How many people see us as a blight on society? How many see us as a liability and not an asset? Children are the most honest and they reflect what they hear at home. At our school, my children have been asked several times if we are on welfare. They somehow have the idea that all aboriginal people live on welfare and this idea comes from home. To many non-aboriginal people, we are all unemployed, on welfare, addicted, and planning our next crime. It's an attitude brought about by ignorance and a lack of understanding or caring. I live in Saskatoon in a neighbourhood with a mixed population and a lot of Aboriginal people. Today, I watch my neighbours go off to work and school. Some work in northern mines, others are finishing up degrees and still others hold down jobs in the city. Aboriginal people pay a lot of income tax, property tax and now sales tax. A lot of us have our own businesses and hire aboriginal people. Housing organizations such as CRESS in Saskatoon and Silver Sage in Regina pay thousands every year in property tax. Métis housing corporations pay out similar amounts. In Saskatchewan, half of our people now live off reserve and the numbers are growing. It's a reality that governments, police forces, institutions and individuals are simply going to have to get used to (Cuthand, May 12, 2000: A19).

This column directly addresses the assumption that Aboriginal Peoples are "a blight on society ... a liability rather than an asset." Cuthand attempts to dispel some of the inaccurate ideas that the public have about Aboriginal Peoples. He makes reference to the Aboriginal Peoples who are employed, educated, tax-paying members of society.

Clearly he is indicating that he and the many people in his neighbourhood belong to the "Good Indian" categorization. Yet, this column conveys a thinly-veiled threat that the urban Aboriginal population is growing and society is "simply going to have to get used to [it]." Despite Cuthand's attempts to dispel the misinformation that he feels the public holds about Aboriginal Peoples, his article contains familiar stereotypes of Aboriginal Peoples. Cuthand's characterization of himself and his neighbours as hard working and employed is presented in contrast to the negative and stereotypical portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples. The need to demonstrate that he and his neighbours are employed, tax-paying individuals indicates the pervasive nature of the stereotypes about Aboriginal unemployment and state dependency. It is unlikely that a similar column about non-Aboriginal community members as employed, tax-paying members of the community would even be considered newsworthy.

This column about successful Aboriginal Peoples also serves to reinforce ideas that Aboriginal unemployment is the fault of *individuals* who are not able to find work. Cuthand does not blame the victim for unemployment, but he does not address any of the barriers that Aboriginal Peoples may face in attempting to gain employment. Rather, this column is trying to make a point about the substantial number of Aboriginal Peoples who do not fit the stereotype of unemployed and welfare dependant. The information about successful Aboriginal Peoples given in this manner contributes to a public feeling that issues, such as high rates of Aboriginal unemployment, are the result of *personal* deficiencies rather than structural barriers to the success of Aboriginal Peoples.

6.3.2 Case #4 Aboriginal Education

Numerous articles focused on the achievements of Aboriginal students at schools such as the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT), and expansions that were occurring at the SIIT. These articles focused on individuals who were successful and who had overcome odds to finish their educations. A Leader Post article published June 3, 2000 entitled "Native graduates happy" discussed one such success story:

> Next year at this time, Karen Delorme hopes to be running her own business in Fort Qu'Appelle. She spent the last two years laying the foundation of her new career at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Indian Business and Management Program. On Friday, Delorme was one of 24 graduates who picked up their business administration diploma at ceremonies in Regina from the comprehensive program, which is offered in Fort Qu'Appelle. ... Her determination is evident in the fact that the mother of six never missed a single class during the two years, despite a six month period when she had to drop off one of her sons at work and get her other children off to school in Fort Qu'Appelle and Balcarres (Leader Post, June 3, 2000: C16).

Karen Delorme's story about having six children and never missing a day of classes speaks to her dedication to her education, but it also suggests that others who cannot do the same are hindered by personal deficiencies rather than structural barriers. This article further discussed the educational achievements of another Aboriginal mother, who had given birth to her second child while enrolled in the program, and described the difficulty of balancing her home life and educational pursuits. The article celebrated the success of these women at SIIT, but with reference to the number of children each woman has thereby reinforcing stereotypes about large Aboriginal families.

6.4 The "Athlete"

The portrayals of the "Athlete" character did not appear frequently in the sample, as it only accounts for 2.97 percent of the entire sample with the StarPhoenix (3.53 percent) having a slightly higher proportion of articles than the Leader Post (2.20 percent). This characterization received no front-page coverage in the sample. It was most often referred to as Aboriginal Peoples who play team sports such baseball or hockey team; occasionally, this characterization is used with track and field athletes and golfers. The "Athlete" was often portrayed as involved with sport to distract himself/ herself from the negative influence of others who would lead the "Athlete" astray. The "Athlete" was represented as a potential role model for Aboriginal youth. The "Athlete" was presented as able to compete against other athletes and win, but regardless they must train and resist the temptation of drugs, alcohol and solvents in order to be competitive. Articles about the "Athlete" focus primarily on the sport in which the "Athlete" competes.

6.4.1. Case #3: Saskatchewan 2000 Summer Games

A typical article featuring reference to the "Athlete" appears in the July 26, 2000 issue of the Leader Post. The article entitled "New Ground for Zone 9's athletes" begins as follows:

> The 78 athletes from Zone 9 are likely finding the Saskatchewan 2000 Summer Games to be a humbling yet exhilarating experience. Many of the competitors are dealing with the change from being the best and the fastest in their tiny northern communities to merely being another athlete at the games. "It's hard because I haven't raced against these people," said Charmane Naytowhow, a 13-year-old athletics competitor from Montreal Lake. "It will be challenging to race against people who are really fast. It's exciting." Zone 9 is making its first appearance at the Games under its own colours and team flag. At past games the 56

> communities north of Prince Albert were included with the athletes and teams in Zone 8. That changed Feb. 1, 1999, when the Saskatchewan Games Council announced the creation of Zone 9. The pilot project is set up for the Summer Games and the Winter Games in Nipawin. After completion of those two events, Zone 9's performance will be evaluated. It will then be decided if Zone 9 will be awarded permanent status as a competitive zone in the Games rotation. "The ball is in our court," said Kerry Bailey, one of the mission staff members from La Ronge. "They aren't just looking at medals and points. They're looking at how organized we were, were we ready, how the athletes behaved, how prepared was our mission staff and all of those kinds of things. We have had some early indicators that things are going well." Discussions of creating a Zone 9 started in September 1997. The project is designed to increase participation by northern athletes in the games and help develop sport programs in that area. ... The Saskatchewan government provided Zone 9 with $25,000 seed money to get the teams off the ground for the first two Games. ... The first half of the project came together Sunday when Zone 9 was part of the parade of athletes for the opening ceremonies. Other than the strong Aboriginal representation on the team, Zone 9 didn't look any different from [the] other eight zones. ... "The ones who were here have made such a commitment and sacrifice that some of the other kids here can't fathom it," said Bailey. "They might get outclassed and they might take a blow to their ego, but we're hoping that will spark something in them to get them going. We're trying to show them the importance of these Games. These are the ones that will be around forever and they could be a springboard to other things. This is just the start of something bigger. If we can get someone to the Western Canada Games or the Canada Summer Games, they can be role models for other kids" (McCormick, July 26, 2000: F4).

This article makes reference to youth at the Saskatchewan Summer Games, and a pilot project to include Zone 9, a zone comprised of communities north of Prince Albert. Clearly they are hoping to encourage Aboriginal youth from that region to participate, as Zone 9's population includes a large proportion of Aboriginal Peoples. The articles references to the sacrifices that these youth have had to make, the humbling experience that the competition could prove to be, and the suggestion that these youth could be outclassed at the games imply that they are considered underdogs in the competition. It is clear that it is for the experience of competition that Zone 9 organizers encourage the youth to participate. Their hope is that the

athletes who may be humbled by their competitors will have something sparked inside of them, and that if something is sparked that these athletes could be role models for other youth in Zone 9. The implication that these games could be a "springboard" to other things suggests that these games could foster a sense of success and achievement.

Clearly this article about Aboriginal youth portrayed as the "Athlete" characterizes this athletics program as a very positive experience for the youth, even if they are not able to win at a provincial level. Nonetheless, these youth who are portrayed as so dedicated and who have had to sacrifice to make it there are presented as atypical. Other articles about "Aboriginal" athletes make direct reference to problems with drugs and alcohol that athletes overcame or avoided with the help of sport. Sport, like the work of the "Cultural Icon," is presented as a positive influence on the lives of Aboriginal Peoples who take part. However, reference is often made to the government funding for such programs, hence implying their expense to the public.

6.4.2 Case #6: Pro-Golfer Overcomes Obstacles

Articles about Aboriginal Peoples overcoming obstacles to succeed in sport are relatively common; however, golfer Notah Begay is one of the rare athletes presented as being successful in mainstream competition. A Leader Post article published July 4, 2000 entitled "Begay having twice the fun" highlights Begay's success and the obstacles that he has overcome to achieve his goals:

> If Tiger Woods isn't careful, they might start referring to him as Notah Begay's college teammate...Begay holed a 25-foot birdie putt on the final hole for a one-stroke victory ... making the American Indian the

> first player to win consecutive tournaments since Woods won the final two events last year. "It's beyond words for me. I'm real pleased with my game. After all the personal problems I've had, it's a pleasure to be playing golf again." Arrested in January for drunk driving and jailed for a week, Begay missed five cuts in ten tournaments after that. Overcoming his personal problems and the death of a close friend this week added to his resolve to win Sunday (Leader Post, July 4, 2000: B4).

The focus on Begay's successes, not only on the golf course but also in overcoming a problem with alcohol, imprisonment and the death of a close friend leave the impression that few obstacles cannot be overcome when the desire to do so is great. Another article about Begay describes him as someone for whom "nothing has ever come easily" (Ferguson, July 13, 2000: B4). These suggestions that hard work and personal dedication lead to Begay's success, like many other articles about "Positively" Characterized Aboriginal Peoples, reinforce the idea that the problems common in Aboriginal communities can be overcome by sheer determination and those who do not succeed fail on the basis of personal deficiencies.

6.5 Mixed Characterization

6.5.1 "Benefactor"

The lone character in the Mixed Portrayals category is the "Benefactor." The portrayal of the "Benefactor" shifted dramatically following allegations of financial mismanagement on behalf of SIGA executives on June 17, 2000, as SIGA was the most frequently mentioned "Benefactor." Prior to the June 17, 2000, coverage of the "Benefactor" most frequently appeared as brief words of thanks for event sponsorship or donations. After June 17, 2000 no further articles featuring words of thanks for "Benefactor" sponsorship appeared in the sample. Instead, organizations, groups and

individuals became guilty by association with the "Benefactor;" several organizations were reportedly considering returning donations accepted from SIGA.

Portrayals of the "Benefactor" account for 5.2 percent of all articles in the sample with a greater proportion of articles featuring this characterization being published in the StarPhoenix (6.67 percent) than the Leader Post (3.30 percent) (see Table 4.2.1). Front-page coverage of this characterization accounts for 5.4 percent of the 56 cover stories, all of which appeared in the StarPhoenix, in which 9.1 percent of all front-page articles in the sample features a portrayal of "Benefactor" (see Table 4.2.2).

6.5.2 Case #4: SIGA Donates a Pediatric Ambulance

A typical example that features portrayals of the "Benefactor" published prior to June 17, 2000 was published in the June 5, 2000 issue of the StarPhoenix. The article, entitled "Fears Along with Rips and Tears," highlights the successful event known as the Teddy Bear B*A*S*H*:

> Emergency health care became a little less intimidating to thousands of children who streamed through a surgical hospital for toys at the third annual Teddy Bear B*A*S*H in Diefenbaker Park." ... The Children's Health Foundation also used the event as an opportunity to officially donate a new pediatric ambulance to Saskatoon District Health. The $150,000 vehicle is filled with special baby- and child- sized equipment. It was purchased with money from the CHF fund-raising activities that were matched dollar for dollar by the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (Adams, June 5, 2000: A5).

Clearly, this article was primarily about the events of the Teddy Bear B*A*S*H, an event intended to familiarize children with the jobs of doctors and nurses. This article also announced the acquisition of a new pediatric ambulance purchased with funds from the Children's Health Foundation fund-raising activities that were matched by the "Benefactor," the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority. The event organizers

and the writer took the opportunity to praise SIGA for their generous donation to the Children's Health Foundation. Articles such as this, clearly portray a positive image of the generosity of Aboriginal organizations like SIGA. Following the events of June 17, 2000 coverage of the "Benefactor" character shifted dramatically.

6.5.3 Case #5: NDP Offers to Return SIGA Donations

The shift in portrayal of the "Benefactor" is highlighted in a StarPhoenix article published June 29, 2000 entitled, "Intended for First Nations was instead given to NDP, MLA says":

> The Saskatchewan Indian Gaming authority (SIGA) has "funnelled" money that should be spent in First Nations communities into the coffers of the NDP, the Opposition Charged Wednesday....Sask. Party MLA Carl Kwiatkowski took the NDP to task for accepting donations form SIGA, whose operations are currently the subject of a forensic audit being carried out by a team of auditors. According to an interim audit report of the Golden Eagle Casino in North Battleford, the casino made separate $250 donations to two NDP fund raising golf tournaments held in Regina and spent another $1,000 at Premier Roy Romanow's annual fund-raising dinner. The sponsorships were made during the fiscal year 1998. Last week the Sask. Party noted that SIGA contributed $1,779 to the Liberal party and its former chief executive officer and his mother each contributed $500 to the election campaign of deputy premier Dwain Lingenfelter. Lingenfelter said the contributions were legal and fully documented, and accused the Sask. Party of being sanctimonious because it received an $800 donation from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations last year (Parker, June 29, 2000: A6).

The article about donations accepted by provincial political parties, particularly the NDP and the Liberals, demonstrated how the organizations, by accepting donations, have come under suspicion. This article about a debate that took place during a question period at the provincial legislature that escalated to name-calling and finger-pointing on the behalf of the political parties, as each pointed to donations that the other had accepted from SIGA and the FSIN. The portrayal of the "Benefactor" shifted

dramatically from grateful appreciation for donations, to misgivings about the "Benefactor" motivations.

6.6 Conclusion

Positive portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples such as the print media's coverage of the "Cultural Icon," the "Good Indian," and the "Athlete" clearly portray their subjects as successful. Characters in this category are portrayed as individuals who, despite being Aboriginal, have achieved some level of success. However, these characterizations are portrayed as atypical with the featured individual being described as the exception rather than rule. Articles featuring positive portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples often dichotomize the portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples. Negative and stereotypical portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples are used to further highlight the good work of the positively portrayed individual and serve to solidify the good/bad dichotomy. Finally, these characterizations frequently mention that the positively portrayed characters have overcome barriers often, associated with Aboriginal Peoples, to achieve success. This implies that the barriers facing Aboriginal Peoples are not structural barriers linked to deeply embedded racist ideology, but rather that they are a mark of personal deficiency that is overcome with hard work and dedication.

The lone mixed characterization character of the "Benefactor" demonstrates how the good work and generosity of the "Benefactor" can be completely overshadowed by scandal. In making the shift from generous "Benefactor" with grateful recipients to corrupt "Benefactor" with hesitant recipients it is clear that respect for Aboriginal organizations is tenuous and it disappears in times of controversy.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The objective of this study is to assess how the print media influence the public's perception of Aboriginal Peoples. The theoretical perspective of "race as a social construct" suggests that "race" is produced and maintained by differential power relations between groups on the basis of political and cultural criteria rather than genetic differences (Rex, 1970). Proponents of this perspective argue that a minority group can be racialized as questionable behaviours are paired with phenotypic traits, suggesting "race" is the cause of such behaviours (Li, 1994). These racialized behaviours can be seen as contributing to stereotypic understandings of minority group members by members of the dominant group. As stereotypical impressions of Aboriginal Peoples are disseminated, they influence majority members' normative expectations of Aboriginal Peoples. In this sense, racial stereotypes can influence the public awareness or misunderstanding of racial minorities. The newspaper print medium, therefore, is especially influential with respect to its affect on "public consciousness" due to its ability to reach many members of society. The present analysis examines the ways in which the print medium socially constructs a racial group through reporting and constructing news involving Aboriginal Peoples and their experiences in Canadian society.

Previous research indicates that the media regularly portray Aboriginal Peoples as problematic (Fleras and Elliott, 1996; Henry et al., 2000; Fleras and Kunz, 2001; Henry and Tator, Forthcoming). The findings of the present study are consistent with those of Fleras and Elliott (1996) and Fleras and Kunz (2001) who demonstrated that Aboriginal Peoples were portrayed as having problems themselves or creating problems that affect other Canadians. Fleras and Elliott (1996) draw attention, in particular, to the problems of Aboriginal Peoples that are perceived to threaten Canadian unity or taxpayer money. Fleras and Kunz (2001:175-6) argue that, "the media seem only too anxious to portray Aboriginal Peoples as problem people whose greed and irrationality are pushing Canada to the brink."

Findings of this research indicate the StarPhoenix and Leader Post consistently portray Aboriginal Peoples as *problematic*. Approximately 70 percent of the articles in the sample feature characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples which are classified in the "Negative" and "Stereotypical" categories. Furthermore, many of the articles that, on the surface, appear to highlight Aboriginal success, in fact contain underlying racial themes that reinforce ideas of personal weakness as an explanation for non-success. The celebrated individual is often presented as atypical, and familiar stereotypes are revisited, effectively demonstrating the differences between these individuals and the "typical" Aboriginal person. In this way, even articles with a positive slant can serve to reinforce stereotypical understandings of Aboriginal Peoples. Highlighting these successes serves to shift attention away from structural barriers to success and suggests that it is personal deficiencies that account for many of the issues that Aboriginal Peoples face.

These findings suggest that these newspapers consistently portray politically active Aboriginal Peoples as unreasonable and demanding. Often the "Troublemaker" character is portrayed as working towards the betterment of the circumstances of Aboriginal Peoples at the expense of other Canadians. The newspapers utilize a us/them dichotomy which appears to communicate that the gains made by Aboriginal Peoples, take or divert, money or privileges away from other Canadians. The "Negative" and "Stereotypical" messages about Aboriginal Peoples that appear in the newspapers serve to reinforce and reproduce racial ideology and the socially constructed image of Aboriginal Peoples. It may be the case that the print media portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples in this unflattering manner is, in part, *responsible* for the social construction of "Aboriginal." Recognising the socially constructed nature of race, this study has argued that the print media contribute to the socially-constructed image of Aboriginal Peoples as problem-laden. If one chooses to recognize the concept of race as a social construction, the ability of the print media to shape and define this and other concepts, can also be realized.

7.2 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study have been divided into four generalized characterizations: Negative, Stereotypical, Positive and Mixed. It was indicated earlier that the characters grouped into the general category of Negative characterizations are reported on most frequently, comprising nearly 42 percent of the sample. Of the remaining characterizations, Stereotypical characterizations account for just over 28 percent of the entire sample, while Positive characterizations account for approximately 25 percent. Finally, the Mixed characterization was relatively infrequent at just over 5

percent. Combined, the Negative and Stereotypical characterizations found in this sample account for an overwhelming 70 percent of articles.

Articles comprising the "Negative Characterizations" category serve to reinforce the perception of Aboriginal Peoples as a problematic population whose issues are expensive to fix and messy to deal with. Overall, the most frequently used characterization was that of the "Troublemaker." Often this characterization was used to describe politically active Aboriginal Peoples who advocated for the recognition of rights and the promise of government funding. The demands of the "Troublemaker" were presented as being sought or granted at a cost to other Canadians.

The "Criminal" character emerged relatively infrequently in this study, appearing in 7.5 percent of all articles in the sample. This characterization refers to those Aboriginal Peoples who are reported as accused or convicted of "street" crime. Most often, the people who are categorized as the "Criminal" are not featured in articles as individuals but as members of a group of people who "fill the prisons." These characterizations play on familiar stereotypes of Aboriginal Peoples as dangerous and/or criminal. The "Criminal" elicits a passionate response from the public, often in the form of letters to the editor. In general, the public seems to refuse to acknowledge the existence of structural bias against Aboriginal Peoples in the justice system.

The "Crook" is the last character in the "Negative Characterization" category. This characterization is apparent in just over 10 percent of all articles in the sample. Portrayals of this character focused on the alleged corruption at many levels of Aboriginal governance, though this character appeared most frequently in relation to the allegations of financial mismanagement at SIGA. Articles that focus on the "Crook"

character suggested that as Aboriginal autonomy and access to money grows, so too will the level of corruption.

The next general category in the print media portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples that was identified in this thesis is the "Stereotypical" Characterization. These characterizations serve to reinforce ideas about Aboriginal Peoples as irresponsible, unemployed, and/or unhealthy. The three characters comprising this category focus on different aspects of Aboriginal life, but each article in this category implies the same overriding message: that Aboriginal Peoples are a problem-laden population requiring the Canadian state to attend to their needs.

The "Typical Indian" character appears in nearly 13 percent of articles in the sample. Articles that portray Aboriginal Peoples as this character tend to focus on problems that are commonly associated with Aboriginal Peoples. These articles discuss the prevalence of high-risk behaviours such as prostitution and drug and alcohol abuse in some Aboriginal communities, and the illnesses, such as AIDS, that are associated with these behaviours. Often these articles emphasize the resistance faced by the government and other people who are trying to "help" when dealing with Aboriginal Peoples and communities who are coping with these issues.

Also falling under the "Stereotypical" Characterization category was the "Victim," accounting for just over 5 percent of articles in the sample. This characterization was defined by individuals who had suffered either physical or verbal victimization that the public and the media considered shocking. When victimization of Aboriginal Peoples was reported in newspapers, the portrayal of the "Victim" varied depending on if the perpetrator was Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. To use an example from the study, the verbal victimization of an Aboriginal woman by a white woman was

portrayed as much more shocking than the severe beating of three Aboriginal Peoples by a group of Aboriginal Peoples. In the first scenario, the white woman who was reported to have hurled racial slurs was criticized as having relinquished common sense and political correctness to engage openly in such activity. This woman was portrayed as acting alone without the support of anyone at the courthouse or in the public. The story focused on the issue of *her* racist ideas rather than the issue of her openly expressing sentiments that many community members may share. The severe beating of three Aboriginal People by a group of Aboriginal People was portrayed as savage but not particularly surprising.

The last of the "Stereotypical" Characterizations, the "Manager," appeared in just less than 10 percent of the articles in the sample. This character was most often *not* an Aboriginal person, but rather a person whose job it was to manage Aboriginal Peoples and/or issues of interest to Aboriginal communities. The "Manager" position was often a political posting.

"Positive" portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples appear to have multiple meanings. While on the surface the subjects are portrayed as successful, closer inspection shows that the articles consistently present these successful individuals in contrast to those who are considered "problematic." This serves to create a dichotomy of good/bad or successful/unsuccessful Aboriginal Peoples, implying that the barriers facing Aboriginal Peoples are not structural barriers linked to deeply-embedded racist ideology, but rather that they are a mark of personal deficiency that can be overcome with hard work and dedication.

The first character in the "Positive" characterization of Aboriginal Peoples is the "Cultural Icon." This characterization of Aboriginal Peoples is used in just under 10

percent of the articles in the entire sample. Portrayals of this character tend to focus on individuals who are, themselves, culturally aware and who share that information with others in some capacity. The knowledge of traditional Aboriginal culture that these individuals hold may come in the forms of arts or practices, but the work of the individual is often celebrated as a success. While the individuals who are characterized in this way are celebrated, they are frequently portrayed as sharing their knowledge with more "problem-laden" Aboriginal Peoples. In this way the negative images of Aboriginal Peoples are still featured in articles that appear to be highlighting success stories.

The second character in the Positive Characterization of Aboriginal Peoples category is that of the "Athlete." The "Athlete" was mentioned infrequently, appearing in just under 3 percent of all articles in the sample. Articles featuring reference to the "Athlete" often referred to individuals who were participating in some type of team sport. The articles often credited the "Athlete" involvement with sport as the reason that person was living a healthier lifestyle, with sport preventing or discouraging the "Athlete" from engaging in self-destructive behaviour. Often, as with the other constituents of this "Positively" characterized, the "Athlete" was presented in contrast to other Aboriginal Peoples who were portrayed as "problem-laden." The "Athlete" was often heralded as a potential role model for Aboriginal youth.

The third character featured in the Positive Characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples is that of the "Good Indian." The "Good Indian" was one of the more frequently used characterizations found in the sample, accounting for just over 12 percent of the total sample. Articles that featured this characterization of Aboriginal Peoples focused on individuals who were successful according to the standards of

dominant society. The articles about individuals who were characterized in this way often focused on education and employment of Aboriginal Peoples. These articles carefully illustrate that these people *did not* rely on welfare and did pay income tax. It was often implied or suggested that successful individuals had overcome *personal* barriers through hard work and dedication, implying that it is personal deficiencies rather than structural barriers that prevent widespread Aboriginal success.

Only one character has been classified as being of "Mixed" Characterization. The portrayal of the "Benefactor" shifts rather dramatically over the course of the sample. The "Benefactor" characterization accounts for just over 5 percent of all articles in the sample. The coverage of this character shifts from grateful recognition of donations made by the "Benefactor," to suspicion and controversy over those donations and their beneficiaries.

7.3 Closing Remarks

This research poses the question: "How is the notion of Aboriginal Peoples socially constructed in the print media?" The media in producing and reporting news also reflect ongoing social norms; in turn the news helps to shape social norms. Literature has suggested that there is a growing concentration of ownership of the media in Canada and that such concentration is not conducive to producing diverse values, and norms that do not support the interests of the state and capital. The increasing concentration of media ownership means that there is a greater homogenization in the dissemination of the information and standardization in the reporting and interpretation of news. Despite professional journalistic standards' the Canadian media retain substantial control over what constitutes newsworthy information, and over how the

subject matter is reported. Over time, media are capable of translating what Giltin (1980) calls "hegemonic reality" into common sense so as to create the impression that hegemonic reality is part of the common ideology. It can be argued that groups portrayed as not subscribing to the dominant class ideology are seen as lacking common sense, and are therefore *problematic*.

The print media are, in part, responsible for the social construction of race due to the way in which minority groups are portrayed in the media. Media coverage of minority groups has consistently been found to be incomplete, negative and stereotypical (Fleras and Kunz, 2001; Henry et al., 2000; Fleras and Elliott, 1996; Khaki and Prasad, 1988). The portrayal of minority group members is important because often these accounts are a key source of information by which majority group members learn about minorities. This research indicates that Aboriginal Peoples are portrayed as a recalcitrant population who cause many problems that are socially and economically costly.

"Negative" and "Stereotypical" characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples in the print media, in part, serve to reproduce and reinforce a socially constructed image of Aboriginal Peoples as problem-laden, dangerous, corrupt, and irresponsible. The media construction of Aboriginal Peoples reinforces the racial division between majority members and Aboriginal Peoples, a division that takes on a strong flavour of blaming Aboriginal Peoples for their own woes. This blaming the victim mitigates social contradictions and undermines the importance of structural barriers in limiting the life chances of marginalized group members.

This study has examined the portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples in the StarPhoenix and the Leader Post and the manner in which "Aboriginal Peoples" are socially

constructed in the print media. The findings of this thesis not only support the theoretical perspective of the social construction of race, but they also serve to confirm other research findings about the continuing racialization of Aboriginal Peoples in the print media and other media. Fleras and Kunz (2001: 175) assert that "few minorities have experienced as much media ambivalence as aboriginal peoples. The situation for Canada's first peoples is increasingly grim as growing aboriginal assertiveness is matched by increasing media hostility over their 'uppityness.'"

The findings that the vast majority of articles about Aboriginal Peoples are "negative" or "stereotypical," are in concert with the finding that many of the "positive" articles contain negative connotations and reinforce long-held stereotypes about Aboriginal Peoples. This knowledge is important because the first step towards solving a problem is recognizing and studying it.

Since this research requires a detailed analysis of text and subtext of the articles, conventional methodology used in survey analysis become untenable. In contrast, discourse analysis offers flexibility and richness in studying the text and racial subtext of articles. The detailed examination of newspaper articles over a three-month timeframe allowed this study to highlight recurrent characterizations of Aboriginal Peoples that persist despite changing topics. A research project of shorter duration or one which focused on a specific event may have failed to uncover the recurrent characterizations in the articles.

This type of research into the portrayal of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal population is especially important given population projections that suggest that Aboriginal Peoples are the fastest growing ethnic group in the province, and that they will soon comprise a large proportion of the working-aged population (FSIN, 1997). One estimate indicates

that by 2041 the Aboriginal population living in Saskatchewan will be 397,018, and that among the working-aged population only 11.1 percent will participate in the labour market. These projections suggest that the dependant population will be on the rise especially in comparison to the 35.2 percent of the working aged population who participated in the labour force in 1991 when the Aboriginal population of Saskatchewan was 116,908 (FSIN, 1997). Demographic projections of Aboriginal Peoples create an urgency to examine relations between Aboriginal Peoples and dominant society. In this particular context the media's portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples can influence those relations. The marginal status of Aboriginal Peoples will likely persist unless there is a radical shift; one that would give Aboriginal Peoples a voice in the media. Critical discourse analysis can play a role in deconstructing the negative and stereotypical messages about Aboriginal Peoples that currently appear in the public arena. Deconstruction is a necessary step towards the empowerment of marginalized Aboriginal Peoples as it will help them realize their due voice in the media and in the public.

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